

END COLUMN
Concern
over a
Chinese
puzzle

By Richard Eaton

This weekend, the testing council of the English Table Tennis Association (ETTA) expect to begin its discussions on how it might use the biggest windfall in its history to land on its doorstep, a extraordinary Chinese player.

Chen is one of the great players of the 1980s, arguably the greatest exponent of an attractive yet breed - the nimble-footed away-from-the-table defences.

But Chen is more than a player who combines defence and attack, back spin and spin, in such unusual rhythm and combinations that it is hearing simultaneously arrangements of two old songs and finding they are perfectly harmonious.

Chen is also a showman, a philosopher, an acrobat, a thinker, and an easy, warm-hearted communicator, with people whose culture and language have been mythic to be unravelled. He has a thousand Europeans out of his hand during his exploits at the English Open two weeks ago.

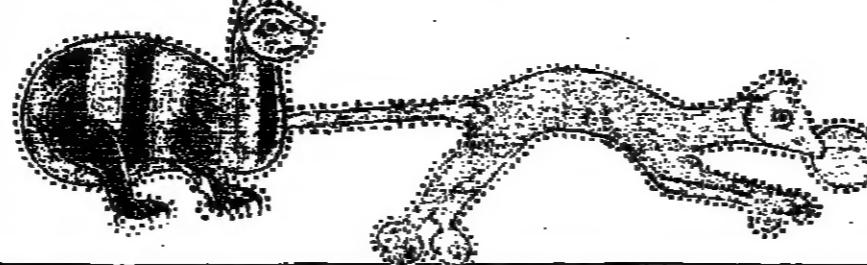
These spectators warned the person as much as to a player. There seems no doubt, therefore, that if anything were to go right, Chen Ninhua, the fellow from Fuzhou who chose a wife and home in Huddersfield, could become the biggest celebrity the game has ever seen.

Can there be any doubt that he should be welcomed and selected for England as soon as possible after he becomes available in May? If some people, there are, are doubtful, then Chen's situation may be the best argument around amid last minute before the end of his future is decided.

There remains those who wonder about whether people

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THE TIMES

SATURDAY JANUARY 20 1990

30p

Russia warns
of 'national
catastrophe'Army command set for
Azerbaijan showdown

From Michael Binyon, Moscow

Soviet army commanders were heading for a showdown with Muslim forces blockading Azerbaijan last night as the Government declared the country was on the brink of a national catastrophe.

At least three soldiers were reported killed as fighting raged in villages and border regions.

Militants setting up road-blocks were firing on troops and observers said 24,000 reservists, interior ministry and KGB troops sent in to calm the situation were likely to open fire soon unless the violence abated.

President Gorbachov yesterday denounced extremists and Muslim fundamentalists for fanning ethnic hatred and promised in a Kremlin speech to do whatever was needed to stop the situation worsening.

And the Central Committee

of the party, the Supreme Soviet and the Soviet Government issued an urgent appeal to Armenians and Azerbaijanis to listen to the voice of reason, curb extremists, support law enforcement bodies and the Soviet troops. Otherwise, they said, "today's tragedy may turn into tomorrow's national catastrophe."

The appeal said the country could not tolerate irresponsible criminal actions, violence and vandalism, and

Waiting village 5
Changing Europe 8, 9
Conor Cruise O'Brien 10

spoke of a wave of righteous indignation sweeping over the nation.

"No-one has the right to speculate on national feelings, to push people toward blind hatred and madness."

Izvestia yesterday reported that Iranian Azeris were supplying weapons and political support to their fellow Muslims in Azerbaijan, and said thousands had crossed the Soviet-Iran frontier in both directions around the Nakhchivan and Dzhailab districts.

The newspaper said pontoon bridges had been set up across the Araks River, and large consignments of arms and ammunition were about to be shipped across.

Nationalist leaders claimed that they controlled the situation all over Azerbaijan. They said they were manning checkpoints on all the main roads and people were following their orders.

In Baku, the capital, Soviet soldiers have been prevented from taking control of the city by militants who have parked buses and lorries across the main streets. Army commanders in Moscow said they would take resolute action - presumably opening fire - if they were still prevented from

The situation was also worsening in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian-populated enclave that is the main source of friction between the two republics, with dwindling supplies of food and an increasingly tight blockade all around.

A further 500 Soviet soldiers were flown into the region, but many more are likely to face the growing concentration of Azerbaijanis determined to assert their control over the hilly area.

Some friends managed to send a chartered plane to Baku and I spirited away 60 people, including most of my relatives. I saved their lives by miracle," Mr Kasparov, who is half-Armenian and half-Soviet, said.

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Tory poll tax attack rejected by Labour

By Philip Webster
Chief Political Correspondent

A bitter political dispute erupted yesterday over ministerial claims that Labour councils had been deliberately inflating the cost of the community charge in the hope of causing resentment against the Government.

Labour leaders labelled the accusation a "deception" as ministers went on the offensive and the community charge faced its final hurdle in the Commons on Thursday.

Mr Kenneth Baker, the Conservative Party chairman, urged ministers to cut back when the bill comes into operation in April.

Mr Webster questioned on the BBC's *Question Time* yesterday whether Labour local authorities were lumping the community charge in with the council tax to the detriment of the poor.

Mr Michael Cunningham, Labour's campaign co-ordinator, however, described the accusation as "a deplorable

cluster article, page 11

Wife 'offered to pay £40,000 for killing of soldier husband'

By Craig Seton

The wife of a soldier serving in Northern Ireland was prepared to pay £40,000 to have him murdered so that she could collect compensation from the Army and money from his life insurance, a court was told yesterday.

But the man Catherine O'Neil believed would carry out the murder contract was an undercover policeman playing the role of potential assassin, Birmingham Crown Court was told.

Mrs O'Neil is alleged to have told him that he could have half of the £50,000 she expected to receive from the Army and money from other insurance policies, if her husband was killed.

Mr Stokes said Mr Wilson became so concerned that he contacted the police. He added: "It was arranged that a police officer would adopt the role of potential assassin and, through David Wilson, a meeting was arranged."

Constable Ellis met Mrs O'Neil in the Golden Fleece public House in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. He was equipped with a hidden microphone to record the conversation, but the juke box was playing so loudly that the tape recording was drowned out.

Mrs Stokes said Mrs O'Neil plainly believed that Constable Ellis was a member of an organization capable of bringing about the death of her husband, who was then

Mr Stokes said that Mrs

serving in Northern Ireland. She said she was prepared to pay him £40,000 if he arranged Corporal O'Neil's death and, although she was given every opportunity to back out, she had said: "I want him dead, just dead", and told him where in Northern Ireland her husband was serving.

In May, a second meeting was arranged at the Hare and Squirrel in Coventry. Mrs O'Neil claimed £250 was available as down payment on the contract. When Constable Ellis, calling himself Joe, asked if she was sure about the contract and whether she wanted to change her mind, she had replied: "Yes, I want him dead. I want the job done."

Shortly afterwards she was arrested and told police that after the first meeting she was too frightened to back out.

Corporal O'Neil died while she was still his legal wife, she would inherit the money which would arise from his death. Not only was it life insurance, but if he died while he was still a serving soldier, a considerable sum of money would be payable from Army funds to the next of kin.

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Exam standards

A-level success in 31 days

By Douglas Broom, Education Reporter

A teacher who successfully coached two teenage boys through a Business Studies A-level course in 31 days said yesterday that the examination was too easy.

David Mason, from Newcastle and Anthony Griffiths from Oxford yesterday received results slips confirming they had passed the examination which they sat in November after 31 days of part-time study. The boys, both aged 18, are studying for other A-levels, and neither had tackled the subject before.

The course they followed — set by the Associated Examining Board — is the most popular A-level Business Studies course in England, attracting 10,000 candidates a year.

Mr Christopher Sivewright, Director of Studies at the Oxford School of Learning, a "cramming college" where both boys studied, said yesterday: "Naturally we are very pleased for them."

"But one does have to question the validity of an examination which can be passed after so little study. This qualification has the same status as an A-level in

Physics — it does give one pause for thought."

For Anthony, who obtained a grade E, his success had its price. Mr Sivewright had offered to charge only half fees if he passed.

David, who obtained a D grade, said: "I have to agree with Mr Sivewright about the standard of the exam. Some people study for an exam for two years and then do not get it. We took 30 days from scratch. It is a fluke."

David said he was not an exceptional scholar. "Mr Sivewright knows exactly how to pass exams."

Mrs Sivewright added: "We are a crammer and we do have pushy, intensive teaching, but 31 days is ridiculous."

Both boys went to the college after getting low A-level grades at school, and their grades in this examination are unlikely to win them university places — in spite of the remarkable speed of their course — since most universities require three passes at grade C or above.

Mr Peter Stanbrook, head of education at the Associated board, denied that the examination was too easy. The pass

rate for the 850 candidates in November had been 61.4 per cent. "That does not suggest to me that it was too easy," he said. "It is not in anyone's interests to set low standards. The subject becomes devolved."

"Obviously we would be concerned if the majority of candidates were doing the subject in this way and passing, but I think these two were exceptional."

• A pioneering scheme to bring foreign graduates to teach in British classrooms has received government backing. Mr John MacGregor, Secretary of State for Education and Science, has approved the £100,000 plan by three Midland councils to recruit 15 graduates of European universities.

They would teach mathematics and sciences, and double up in their native languages.

Warwickshire, Solihull and Coventry councils would recruit the graduates to work in secondary schools on two-year contracts during which they would also receive teacher-training from Warwick University.

Kidneys-for-sale hearing

Surgeon praised for 'dedicated' work

By John Young

Mr Bewick, Dr Raymond Crockett, a kidney specialist, and Mr Michael Joyce, a urologist.

Lord McColl described Mr Joyce as an outstanding surgeon. He was highly intelligent but was also very humble and he had never heard him boast of his work.

Mr Joyce admitted on Thursday that he now realized that for the past 14 years he

had behaved unethically by operating on donors without first getting to know them and ascertaining their background and medical history. Lord McColl said that he himself had been involved in kidney transplants, but not since 1974.

Asked by Mr John Goldring, QC for Mr Joyce, how much contact he would have had with the donor before an operation, he replied: "Not very much."

He would have played no part in getting the donor's permission or in counselling him. He would have behaved in the same way as Mr Joyce and did not see it as his job to do any more.

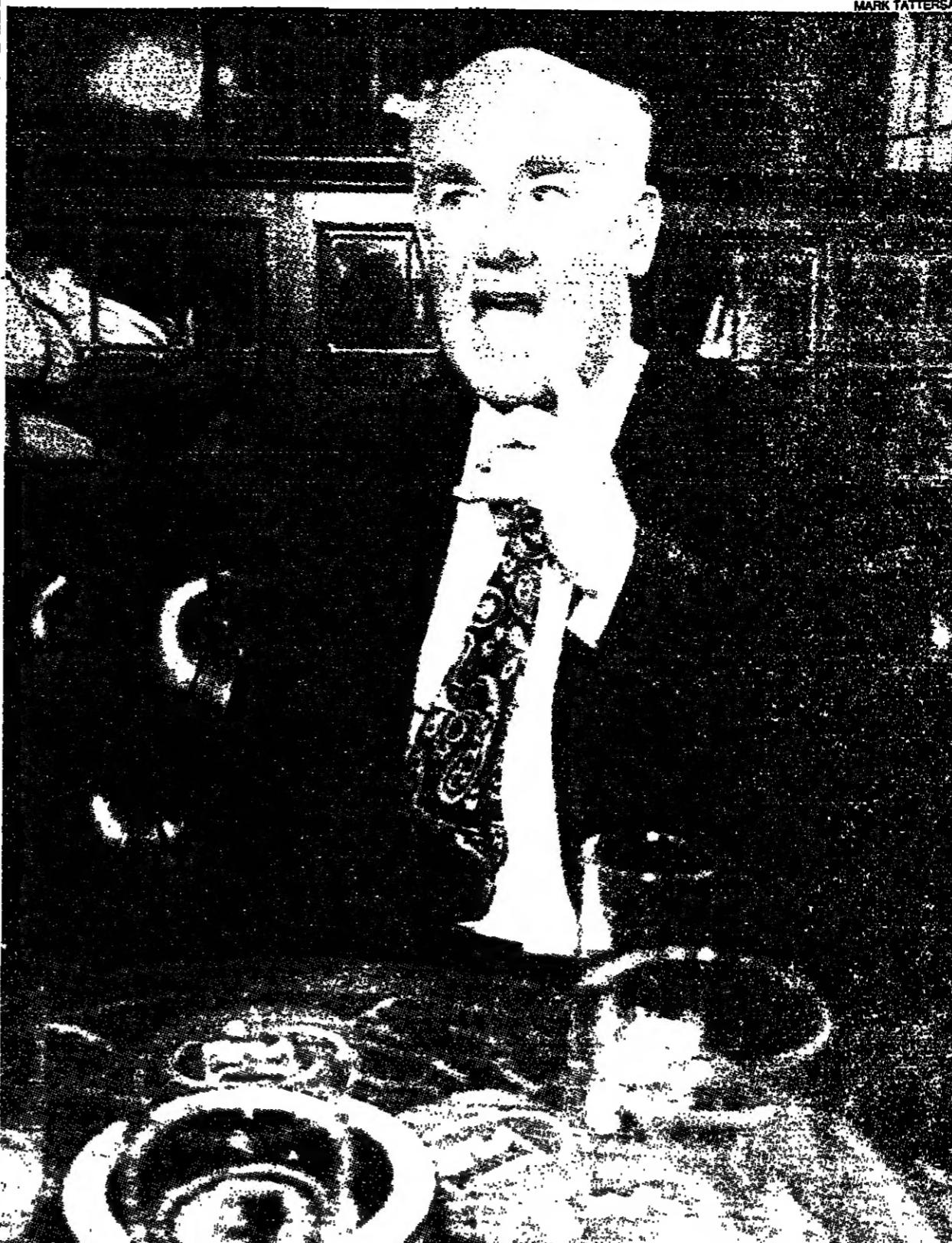
Professor Cyril Chantler, professor of paediatric nephrology at Guy's, described Mr Joyce as "an excellent surgeon and also a very good doctor".

Doctors had to trust colleagues and the practice of medicine would be made very difficult if they could not do so.

Asked by Mr Rodger Bell,

Lane is a dinosaur, Pickles says

MARK TATTERSALL



Judge Pickles at his impromptu press conference in a public house in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, yesterday.

Lord Lane, the Lord Chief Justice, was branded "an ancient dinosaur living in the wrong age" in an extraordinary attack yesterday by Judge Pickles, whose decision to imprison a young mother and her three-month-old child for shop theft was overturned by the Court of Appeal earlier this week (David Sapsted writes).

"I have no doubt that he and others in the senior judiciary resent the fact that I and others, including the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay, are trying to reform the judiciary and the legal system," the judge said, adding that he considered Lord Lane to be a good lawyer.

But he said: "He is like one of those ancient dinosaurs who is living in the wrong age, in my respectful view."

Common frog abandons country home

By Ruth Gledhill

Frogs, newts and toads in Britain's ponds could be facing a national crisis, according to a new survey.

If the trend continues, the days when children could collect frogs' spawn in a jar from the village pond could be drawing to a close.

The £90,000 six-year research, funded by the Nature Conservancy Council, has found an alarming decline in the number of sites capable of sustaining any amphibian life. Volunteers aged from five to 90 visited 6,500 ponds, lakes,

reservoirs, water tanks and other fresh water sites. They had expected to find frogs, toads and newts in eight out of 10 but discovered the once ubiquitous common frog in only half that number; one fifth contained common toads and smooth newts and one tenth had palmate newts. The results will be published soon.

Dr Mary Swan, of Leicester Polytechnic, the survey co-ordinator, said: "We expected to find frogs wherever there was water." Many apparently healthy ponds throughout Britain had been abandoned for no apparent reason.

Nearly half had no amphibians at all, although local people remembered seeing frogs and newts in the past. In other places, the ponds themselves had disappeared.

Dr Swan said we appeared to be making the countryside inhospitable to them. "These animals should be ubiquitous and common. They are adaptable and require minimum consideration."

Dr Arnold Cook, amphibian specialist with the Nature Conservancy Council, claimed there were still millions of frogs in Britain. They had become suburban animals living in garden ponds.

Labour to try to curb Murdoch

Labour MPs will attempt next week to force Mr Rupert Murdoch to choose between his newspaper and satellite television interests.

Amendments to the Broadcasting Bill during the Commons committee stage will recommend that he should not be allowed to retain both his newspaper titles — *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Sun*, *Today* and *News of the World* — and Sky Television.

The Bill forbids newspaper proprietors from owning independent television companies or British Satellite Broadcasting channels.

Mr Robin Corbett, Labour's broadcasting spokesman, said yesterday that Mr Murdoch was excluded from constraints on cross-media ownership by a "technicality" because Sky Television used telecommunication frequencies.

The proposal stands little chance of success in the Commons, but might receive a more favourable reception in the Lords.



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House cost in London drops 10%

By Christopher Warman
Property Correspondent

House prices in London dropped by an average 10 per cent. last year, bringing the average price down to £36,800, the lowest since the beginning of 1988, the London Research Centre reports in its quarterly bulletin.

The largest annual fall was in Tower Hamlets, where prices plummeted by 36 per cent. and the only borough to show an increase was Westminster, which showed a rise of 2 per cent. to £144,000, overtaking Kensington and Chelsea (down 18 per cent. to £138,400) as the most expensive borough in London.

In the last quarter prices fell in all, but four boroughs — Barking and Dagenham, Wandsworth, Westminster and Hackney.

Lord McColl was giving evidence at the end of the fourth week of a hearing by the General Medical Council professional conduct committee into charges of serious professional misconduct against

Mr Bewick, Dr Raymond Crockett, a kidney specialist, and Mr Michael Joyce, a urologist.

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Mr Joyce admitted on

Thursday that he now realized that for the past 14 years he had behaved unethically by operating on donors without first getting to know them and ascertaining their background and medical history. Lord McColl said that he himself had been involved in kidney transplants, but not since 1974.

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End in sight as £4m Piper Alpha inquiry enters second year

By John Griffiths

The Piper Alpha inquiry yesterday passed its first anniversary, hearing evidence from the penultimate witness, Mr James Petrie, Department of Energy safety director, on the offshore safety regime.

The disaster inquiry, Britain's longest, will conclude next month having heard over 10 million words of evidence at a cost to the taxpayer of more than £4 million.

The inquiry is chaired by Lord Cullen, a Scottish High Court judge, assisted by three assessors. Professor Frank Lees of Loughborough University, Mr Malcolm Ford, former managing director of British, and Mr Brian Appleton, a director of ICI.

Since January 19 last year, Lord Cullen has been examining the potential causes of the disaster. The offshore oil platform was destroyed by explosion and fire on July 6, 1988, killing 165 offshore workers and two rescuers.

The first part of the inquiry, which looked at the causes of the explosion, heard evidence from 196 witnesses, including management of Occidental Petroleum, the platform operator, offshore workers, technical ex-

perts, and all but three survivors. Their evidence ranged from harrowing accounts of escape from the burning platform to minutely-detailed examinations of possible causes of the initial explosion.

Among the improvements suggested have been increased protection against fire and explosion for living quarters and control room areas.

The final witness, Mr Robert Priddle, Deputy Secretary at the Department of Energy, is expected to give evidence early next week. After a short break, the inquiry will conclude next month with legal submissions from the various parties represented.

Lord Cullen's report will probably take several months to prepare. Some of his expected recommendations, such as the need for improved emergency valves on pipelines, have been pre-empted by new regulations, but it is likely that the report will further cover such areas as written work procedures, standards of standby boats, and the need for systematic hazard assessment offshore.

Given the absence of physical evidence and the death of many of those involved, however, it is unlikely that the inquiry will form a definitive conclusion on the causes.

The second part of the inquiry, looking at ways of preventing similar disasters, began in November and has heard from 64 witnesses, including senior industry figures, equipment manufacturers, representatives of British and

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Separate deal on pay put to college heads

By Douglas Broom, Education Reporter

Colleges principals are to be offered a separate pay deal from lecturers to try to break the deadlock in the 18-month pay dispute which has affected three million students in further education.

As well as pay rises above the 8 per cent presently on offer to lecturers, the college heads are being offered separate negotiating machinery to fix their pay in future years.

The proposal, which was put to the Association of College Principals at a private meeting earlier this week, is certain to anger the main lecturers' union, the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education. Its members have imposed a ban on all examination and continuous assessment work in protest at the employers' determination to link the pay offer to new working practices.

However, the initiative was welcomed by Mr David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, who said it should set a precedent for similar treatment for school heads and their deputies.

Mr Neil Fletcher, leader of the local authority employers said yesterday: "We need to

recognize, remunerate and reward the skills of college principals who are now responsible for budgets of millions of pounds."

The cost of the student loan scheme planned by the Government could have been reduced by the bank's refusal to help in the loans administration (Sam Kiley writes).

Although the withdrawal of the banks last month reportedly infuriated the Prime Minister, plans to organize debt collection by direct debit could result in substantial savings.

Under the original plan the bank branches were to have been paid £12 a head for advising and registering students for a loan each year.

Now students will apply directly to the Student Loans Company Ltd in Glasgow for their annual "top-up" to the maintenance grant of about £400 a year.

Officials at the Department of Education and Science are still costing the new plan but Mr John MacGregor, the Secretary of State for Education, believes the simplified system could be cheaper than the one originally published by his predecessor, Mr Kenneth Baker.

ean-up
ADRIAN BROOM

Prisoner
fights to
stay in jail

A prisoner was back in jail last night after being accidentally freed from a six-month prison sentence after just one week. A warder at Lincoln Prison was allowed the time Mick Shooter had spent on remand, even though he said there had to be some mistake. Prison officers insisted he was released.

After being released, Shooter, who was jailed for passing bad cheques, tried to tell one of the prison governors that he had been freed.

Mick Shooter, aged 43, of Station Road, Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, contacted his prison officer and was advised to go himself to police.

Gay verdict

A gay couple poll in the Gay Pride rally show in the Irish Republic showed that 65.5 per cent of 144 respondents were in favour of having gay rights between consenting adults.

Tough line

A man who was accused of a £1,700 robbery at a Bradford supermarket has been found guilty of a lesser offence. The man, who was found guilty of breaking into a shop and robbing it, was found guilty of a lesser offence.

Bomb hunt

A bomb was found in a car in a car park in Bradford, West Yorkshire, and police have been searching for a suspect.

Death crash

A man and a woman died in a car crash on the A1080 in East Yorkshire.

Kinnock

A man who was found dead in a car in a car park in Bradford, West Yorkshire, has been found guilty of a lesser offence.

Sexual assault

A man who was found guilty of sexual assault on a woman in a car in Bradford, West Yorkshire, has been found guilty of a lesser offence.

Magna Carta trip ends in cash loss

A fund-raising trip to Australia, centred around Lincoln Cathedral's copy of the Magna Carta, has made a loss of up to £70,000.

The Very Rev Brandon Jackson, Dean of the cathedral, said yesterday that when the Magna Carta, one of four surviving copies made at the time of signing in 1215, returns to Lincoln next month from a tour of Canada he wants it to stay in the city.

The trip to Australia in 1988, arranged by his predecessor, should have raised money towards an exhibition site for the Magna Carta.

The issue is expected to be the subject of heated discussion at a meeting of The Chapter, the cathedral's governing body, on Tuesday. It had been

told by Canon Rex Davis, the Subdean and cathedral treasurer, that the trip should generate a £50,000 surplus.

Canon Davis, an Australian, found that despite contributions from Lincolnshire County Council and the World Expo authorities in Brisbane the trip lost £38,000-£70,000.

Mr Jackson is determined there will be a full inquiry. "I have a responsibility, with the chapter, to the public who give to this cathedral," he said.

When full accounts from the treasurer are available the chapter will discuss them.

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UNPAID BILLS

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Whitehall concern as industry pay lures key officials

By Tim Jones, Employment Affairs Correspondent

Ministers have been warned that the administration of the country is suffering because of the increasing salary differences between executives in private industry and key civil servants. Signs are growing that concerns over pay and anomalies within the service are forcing more Whitehall officials to consider outside offers.

More than 40 civil servants earning up to £43,000 have written to their union, the First Division Association, protesting about the situation. Some have considered resigning to earn up to £20,000 more with private firms.

The warnings, delivered in private, come amid strong indications that the Government may pay review body increases for 600 top civil servants in stages to avoid undermining its stand against the ambulance workers and its determination to curb rises.

Whitehall sources say the Government is alarmed by suggestions that the Top Salaries Review Body may be considering increases of up to

15 per cent for civil servants whose skills, experience and expertise would command big salaries in the open market.

Union leaders have complained of the "political constraints" within which they were forced to negotiate their last pay rise which they said further widened the difference between their members and comparable workers in outside industry.

Whitehall departments are suffering from a gathering staff drain as unions voice warnings that pay levels are not competitive enough to entice high-calibre recruits into the upper echelons of the service.

Unions fear that any move to effectively scale down the annual percentage increase — to be recommended by the review body in a report due before the Prime Minister by the end of the month — will severely undermine moral in the service.

Because of anomalies, unions claim, loyalty is being stretched to breaking point. One under-secretary wrote: "I am now £3,607 worse off than if I had stayed one grade lower."

Last night, Mr Bill Brett, general secretary of the Institution of Professionals, Managers and Specialists said: "Unless the situation is addressed people key people will leave the service and top calibre recruits will not enter."

Mr Leslie Christie, general secretary of the National Union of Public and Civil Servants said: "Overwhelmingly, there is a sense that people are not being treated fairly."

Treasury ministers are particularly worried about the loss of senior Treasury, Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise staff. They would welcome some move towards the closer comparison of civil service and private sector pay, which would result in more money for tax inspectors but less for inspectors of schools.

Ford lays off 8,000 as strike effects bite

By Kevin Eason, Motoring Correspondent

More than 8,000 Ford production workers were laid off yesterday as key craftsmen refused to end their unofficial strike at the Halewood plant on Merseyside, raising company losses to more than £100 million.

While the rest of the company's manual workers waited for the crucial strike ballot over pay next week, skilled workers disrupted Halewood for the fifth day running.

Wildcat action is now estimated to have cost the company up to £110 million in lost output. Halewood has suffered the worst, with 400

assembly line staff.

Both groups are understood to be holding mass meetings at the weekend to decide whether to carry on with their strikes. The results of the ballot over Ford's final offer of a two-year deal, worth 10.2 per cent in the first year and 8 per cent on inflation plus 2.5 per cent in the second, should be known by Thursday.

The work of Mr Shepherd and his colleagues is one part of the campaign against a disease that seems to attack cows at random, is still little understood and, according to many of those within the industry, is irrationally feared. Last week, however, the Government, which insists that there

is no evidence that people can

contract BSE, announced a £12 million research programme into the disease and *Nature*, the scientific journal, said earlier this week that the "chilling" question of whether humans are at risk by consuming meat from infected cattle must be answered.

West Germany has imposed an import ban on British beef, raising threats to the multi-million pound export trade, but a report prepared for

● Answer me this; can it be spread to humans? And will you still eat it? ■

the European Community veterinary committee claims that BSE is not a danger to health. It is against this background, fuelled by the emotive name for the condition as "mad cow disease", that Mr Shepherd and his colleagues are working.

At the market in Thirsk Mr Shepherd wanders along the rows of pens holding several hundred cattle. He is looking for the signs that an animal may be suffering from the

first cases of BSE were identified in 1986 and it became a notifiable disease two years later. Since then 9,000 cattle have been destroyed out of a national herd of four million; in the northern region there have been 578 positive cases out of a cattle population of 1.6 million compared with about 4,000 in the South-west, the worst affected area.

According to Mr James Seed, the northern regional veterinary officer, all evidence points to the disease, which causes a progressive degeneration of a cow's brain, having been spread by the use of sheep brain, infected with the similar disease, scrapie, in protein feed, in a procedure which is now banned.

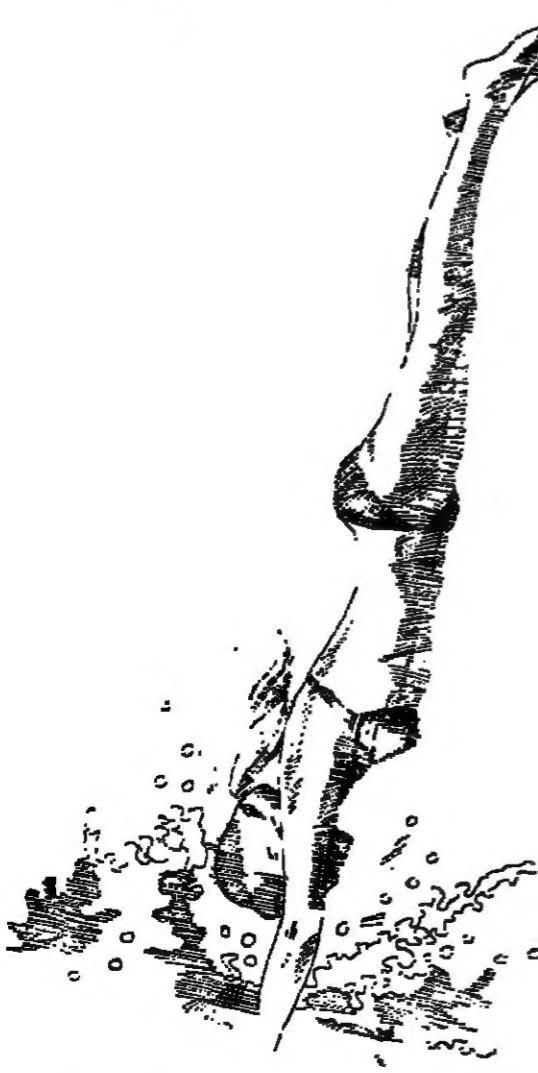
Research is under way to try and understand more about the disease, how it is spread and why it affects some cows and not others.

As part of the investigation the ministry is monitoring the development of almost 700 calves at experimental husbandry farms around Britain. They have been purchased in pairs from farms, one calf whose mother had been found to be infected with BSE and the other from a healthy parent and their growth will be closely watched over the years for any signs of BSE.

Scientists at the ministry's Central Veterinary Laboratories at Weybridge in Surrey have, he says, produced a computer projection which shows the number of cases of BSE reaching a plateau through to 1997 when they will begin to fall dramatically. "By the end of this century we will have seen the last of it," Mr Seed said.

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Cow madness search in cattle markets



Midwinter madness: Mr Matt Shepherd ruminates on his fruitless search for animals sick with bovine spongiform encephalopathy in the market at Thirsk.

By Peter Davenport

In the maze of pens holding cattle at the Thirsk auction market in North Yorkshire, Mr Matt Shepherd, Ministry of Agriculture veterinary surgeon is making a spot check for any animals showing signs of bovine spongiform encephalopathy when he is confronted by a farmer who said: "Answer me this, veterinary, can it be spread to humans? Will you still go on eating meat despite all this fuss?"

Mr Shepherd, one of six ministry vets checking the 20 markets and 38 abattoirs in North Yorkshire, does not hesitate. "I am still eating meat and so are my family. There is no evidence at all that BSE can spread from animals to humans. Everything that can possibly be done to stop infected animals getting into the food chain is being done."

The work of Mr Shepherd and his colleagues is one part of the campaign against a disease that seems to attack cows at random, is still little understood and, according to many of those within the industry, is irrationally feared. Last week, however, the Government, which insists that there

is no evidence that people can contract BSE, announced a £12 million research programme into the disease and *Nature*, the scientific journal, said earlier this week that the "chilling" question of whether humans are at risk by consuming meat from infected cattle must be answered.

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According to Mr James Seed, the northern regional veterinary officer,

Ex-pilot claims £1m

Navy to be sued over ski fall

By David Sapsford

A £1 million claim for compensation against the Ministry of Defence is to be made on behalf of a helicopter pilot who was paralysed from the shoulders down after being injured in trials in the Royal Navy ski team.

The case will be one of the first to challenge the secrecy of MoD inquiries into deaths and injuries involving service personnel, after a ruling by a High Court judge on Thursday which rejected the traditional justification for suppressing publication of all board of inquiry reports into military accidents.

Lawyers representing Lieutenant Trevor Jones had issued a writ against the MoD alleging negligence, but did not proceed until now because the ministry refused to disclose its accident report on the ground that it contained technical details and classified information.

"Until now, there has been a deliberate attempt to prevent us getting the full facts by the MoD which is hiding behind the force of national security in respect of a skiing accident," Mr Douglas Stewart, senior partner in the London firm, Stewarts, said.

The solicitors, who also brought the action which resulted in Mr Justice Popplewell's ruling on Thursday, said they planned to press ahead immediately with Lieutenant Jones's claim of negligence in the expectation the ministry would be forced to produce its

report. Lieutenant Jones, aged 28, lives in south Wales in a home which his mother has had to pay to be specially converted. He has a naval pension but the family spoke yesterday of the huge cost of looking after him, including 24-hour nursing at £20,000 a year.

His brother, Mr Rod Jones, said: "It has been a struggle financially but we have been unable to press ahead with a claim against the ministry because it has refused to release the report into what happened. Now we hope the result of the test case will force the ministry to release it in court.

"Trevor is going to have to receive care for the rest of his life. The cost of housing someone with such an extensive disability is enormous.

More than that, though, we want Trevor to be able to afford to have some fun in his life."

Lieutenant Jones, a helicopter pilot who rescued Mr Richard Branson and Mr Per Lindstrand when their transatlantic balloon crashed into the sea five years ago, suffered spinal injuries when he hit a road while practising with the Navy ski squad at Passturn, Austria, in January, 1988. Stewarts issued a writ for damages, claiming negligence by the MoD for poor supervision, poor design and inadequate supervision on the grand slalom course.

A ministry spokeswoman said that although the words "classified information" were used to justify non-publication of the report, the real reason was that all board of inquiry reports were confidential to protect individuals giving evidence.

The MoD said it fears that if servicemen knew the reports would be published, they would be reluctant to give evidence. That could prevent the ministry introducing changes to protect service personnel.

A summary of the report's findings had been sent to Lieutenant Jones's solicitors, the spokeswoman said, but Mr Stewart maintained that that was an inadequate basis for a claim for damages which would require detailed analysis of the events.

Computer peril of year 2000

By Nick Nuttall, Technology Correspondent

Banks, universities and industry could experience chaos and billions of pounds of bills become worthless as computers cannot face the year 2000.

Experts have realized that many computer programmes were never designed to see in the new millennium with functions firmly rooted in the 20th century.

Consequently the clocks which control much of a computer's functions, including staff pay rolls, automatic payments, the printing of reports and letters, will be thrown into disarray unless urgent and costly action is taken.

Some will automatically switch their dates back to 1900, others cannot be predicted.

The problem is being compared to cheque book users who fail to register the new year, but this, however, is on a grander and potentially highly disruptive scale.

Worst affected are likely to be users of an old computer language called Cobol, which

include banks and financial institutions. The Banks of Scotland and England, who are responsible for the auditing and quality of financial institutions' software, are so concerned about the problem that they are considering an awareness campaign urging users to have strategies in place by 1995.

Mr Mauro said: "The computer industry has to start worrying about this now.

"It is going to be expensive, simply because code that needs to be changed won't all be in one place. It is as massive a change as decimalization."

His fears are echoed by Mr Terry Madgwick, project services manager for Surrey County Council.

"A lot of the problems have been caused by the attitude of software developers thinking they won't be around when the changes are needed," he said.

"Everyone must be up to speed on this by 1995 at the latest."

Grim days for Argentina as Menem's medicine works

From Charles Bremer
Buenos Aires

Beneath the cavernous vault of the old Retiro railway station in central Buenos Aires, a queue snakes a hundred yards across the hall, a place of shabby grandeur that smacks more of old Russia than the British entrepreneurs who built it in Argentina's golden age.

Given that the Government has just frozen most ordinary citizens' savings for 10 years in its latest attempt to save off national ruin, and food prices have hyper-inflated from outrageous to insane, it would seem reasonable to think the queue consisted of refugees or seekers of bread. But that would be wrong. They are waiting for two hours simply to buy a ticket to Mar del Plata, the prime seaside resort to which Buenos Aires citizens traditionally repair in the high summer cloddiness of January.

"What can you do?" says Señor Roberto d'Agostino, an office clerk who is taking his family to the coast even though his £70 monthly salary barely covers more than a few days' living.

Argentina never used to be like this in the old days, but life goes on somehow."

Making do while hankering after the

old days has been the refrain of Argentina ever since the tango was invented, but the old theme can be heard all around the elegant capital this month as President Menem, the flamboyant Peronist President, struggles to impose his fourth austerity programme since he took office six months ago from Señor Raúl Alfonsín.

Like the summer heat, unreality hangs heavy over Buenos Aires whose people have always considered themselves Europe's most civilized outpost in America. The mood of make-believe pervades even the Government. President Menem can be seen on television commercials and in posters around the city, champagne glass in hand, congratulating his people on "putting the country back on its feet", an approach that one local commentator likened to that of the late Nicole Ceausescu.

The East European comparison, which can be heard all over Argentina as "Menemostroika" gets under way, is not fair as the President mimics few words on the choices facing the country. Just before the champagne campaign was launched, the long-haired Señor Menem proclaimed dramatically: "We are all in

the same plane and there are no parachutes. After this, the abyss".

This week, as the country struggled with the idea of passing around government bonds and grubby re-enclosed personal cheques as an additional form of currency, Señor Menem intervened to bring some of his ministers back to reality. He ordered them to stay at home unless they had official business abroad — a step that became necessary after Señor Omar Fassi Lavelle, the Minister for Tourism, appeared in newspapers disporting himself in a discotheque in Punta del Este, the chic resort in Uruguay. Shortly before his trip, the minister had starred in a campaign appealing to Argentines to holiday at home in the current crisis.

The well-to-do have always kept one foot out of the country. One of the roots of Argentina's decline from its rank as one of the 10 richest countries after the Second World War has been the way anyone who could has converted his money into dollars and stashed it abroad. Some \$5 billion privately held dollars are now estimated to be locked up in banks from Momevideo to Zurich, one of the highest levels of capital flight

in the world. Much of it is said to have come straight from the huge public loans made to Argentina in the 1970s.

For the mass of Argentines who do not own dollars abroad, penury lurks at the door. The austral has slid from 14 to the dollar to nearly 2,000 in 12 months. Putting aside the 5,000 per cent inflation that rendered prices virtually meaningless last year, real income has fallen by 60 per cent over the past year. Gradually the middle class of Argentina is being thrust into the Third World.

Shanty towns are expanding around the capital and for the first time for years, the Army is talking out loud. General Isidro Cáceres, the commander in chief, warned of the danger of "states of anarchy" if the economic crisis persisted, but he insisted the forces stood behind the President.

This week fresh signs of discontent emerged when police in two cities demonstrated against a 50 per cent pay rise by staying in their barracks. Señor Menem responded in his trademark style with a warning that he would root out police corruption and "whip the arses" of those responsible. It is a mark of Señor Menem's continuing popularity

that there have been no disturbances on the level of the food rioting that killed a dozen people a year ago. Despite his stiff measures, the charismatic, diminutive President enjoys a remarkable degree of trust. Last year when he claimed the mantle of Juan Perón, he told Argentines he would raise it Lazarus-like and restore its grandeur.

Taking office he promised renewed purpose both for "the poor kids who are hungry and the rich kids who are sad". Then just as the unions, bureaucrats and rich monopoly businesses thought they had preserved their power, the President underwent an astounding conversion, breaking with the protectionism that had long smothered the economy and espousing the free-market policies dear to Mrs Thatcher and the International Monetary Fund.

He also appealed the restive military by pardoning dozens of officers convicted of human rights crimes in the 1970s and of offences from the Falklands War. On top of that he risked putting Falklands sovereignty aside and enthusiastically renewing ties with Britain.

With an economic team recruited from Bunge and Born, the biggest

Argentine multinational, Señor Menem managed to bring down inflation to just a few per cent a month and embarked on plans to privatize the vast state industries like the railways and telephone company that have sponged off the economy since Perón built his corporatist state in the late 1940s.

He is now opposed by many of the union barons and the bureaucracy. Big monopoly businesses are unhappy about the removal of their protection and no one has any idea where to begin persuading them to pay income tax. At present, about 30,000 out of 33 million Argentines, or about 0.01 of the population, pay any at all.

December's economic panic has thrown reform plans into turmoil but the financial medicine seems to be working. Señor Antonio Erman González, Señor Menem's third Economics Minister, blocked all seven-day deposit accounts, the main vehicle to hedge against inflation, and issued 10-year bonds denominated in dollars. In the absence of Australis, these "Bonexes" now circulate like a new currency at about a third of their face value. The dollar came down and prices halted their explosion.

US drug 'sting' nets capital's Mayor

From Martin Fletcher, Washington

The American capital woke yesterday to the startling news that Mr Marion Barry, its long-time Mayor, had been arrested at a hotel the previous night for smoking "crack".

The arrest shocked Washington and spelled the almost certain end of Mr Barry's remarkable political career. For seven years he has shrugged off allegations of drug-taking and was preparing to announce tomorrow his candidacy for a fourth term of office.

It also opened the way for the Rev Jesse Jackson, the fiery black civil rights leader, to enter this year's mayoral race. He moved to Washington from Chicago last summer, but always said that he would not run again against Mr Barry. "I'm too stunned to talk right now," said Mr Jackson when told the news.

Mr Barry, Mayor since 1979, was arrested shortly after 8pm in a seventh-floor room at the Vista Hotel, just six blocks from the White House.

He was said to have been in the room with an unidentified woman for about an hour, smoking crack cocaine, while the authorities secretly filmed him. One television report said the woman was an old friend from California who allowed herself to be used as bait by the FBI.

A statement issued later by Mr Jay Stephens, the US Attorney, said "tonight's undercover operation was part of an ongoing public corruption probe", indicating that Mr Barry had been snared in a "sting" mounted jointly by the FBI and Washington's police a few weeks earlier.

Mr Barry was due to be formally charged in a Wash-

ington court yesterday and Mr Kenneth Mundt, his lawyer, indicated that he would press for the offence to be treated as a misdemeanour rather than a more serious felony.

Mr Barry, his own police bodyguard in tow, was taken to FBI headquarters where he called his lawyers. At 12.40am yesterday he was driven back to his south-east Washington home where both he and the lawyers refused to answer reporters' questions.

The dramatic events shocked fellow political leaders in this largely black city which is riddled with drugs and consequently has the

● The arrest has opened the way for Mr Jesse Jackson to enter this year's mayoral race. ●

highest per capita murder rate in the nation. There were 29 killings in the first 17 days of 1990 following last year's record 438. Mr David Clarke, the city council chairman, said it was "a tragic moment in our city's history".

Nor was it clear who would take over the running of the city if Mr Barry, who has a year of his term to run, is convicted. "The District Charter does not spell out every step in cookbook fashion in a situation like this," said Mr Gregory Mize, general counsel to the city council.

"This is not something you think is going to happen."

Mr Barry, who is 53, had been plagued by allegations of

drug-taking since 1983, but had repeatedly denied them. Popular among Washington's huge black population, he argued to some effect that he was the victim of a racist white press and a "new McCarthyism". He was confident of re-election and only on Wednesday had delivered an upbeat assessment of his administration's record, claiming that it was winning the war against crime, drugs and violence.

The most serious allegation stemmed from an occasion in December, 1988, when policemen investigating a complaint about drug-taking in Washington's Ramada Inn found Mr Barry in the room with Mr Charles Lewis, a friend and former city employee. This gave rise to a year-long grand jury investigation which was now in the process of deciding whether to press for Mr Barry's prosecution.

Mr Barry's arrest places Mr Jackson in an acute dilemma. He would almost certainly win if he now runs for Mayor. The job would enable him to rebut charges that he has no administrative experience and would dispel the notion that he has been overrated by the new breed of mainstream, moderate black politicians epitomized by Mr Douglas Wilder and Mr David Dinkins, respective winners of November's gubernatorial election in Virginia and mayoral race in New York.

However, it would also exclude him from another bid for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1992. Were he now to run for mayor, he would be open to the charge that he was running away from some of the worst black problems in America.



Mr Barry being escorted into his home by an FBI agent after his arrest on a drug charge.

WORLD ROUNDUP

Delhi set to take over in Kashmir

Jammu, India (AP) — The Government of Jammu and Kashmir state has resigned, clearing the way for the Federal Government to administer the region and attempt to control it again by Muslim separatists, officials said yesterday. Dr Farooq Abdullah, the Chief Minister, resigned late Thursday night after alleging he was not consulted on the appointment of the Federal Government's representative to the region.

Earlier Thursday the Federal Government reappointed Jagmohan, an official who uses only one name and who has a reputation for strict administration, as the state's governor. During his previous tenure, from 1982 to 1988, he curbed the spread of Muslim unrest.

Fog delays shuttle

Edwards Air Force Base (Reuters) — The crew of the space shuttle Columbia, carrying a bus-sized satellite on board, must spend an extra day circling Earth because of fog shrouding its rain-soaked landing strip in the Mojave desert. A US space agency spokeswoman said the latest landing time for Columbia is early this morning in California, giving the shuttle, coming in at 102 tons, an extra 22 orbits of Earth. A NASA spokesman said there was enough food on board to feed the five astronauts.

Nakasone sues paper

Tokyo — Mr Yasuhiro Nakasone, the former Japanese Prime Minister, yesterday sued the *Asahi Shimbun*, a national daily, which he said had defamed him by suggesting that he received 120 million yen (£480,000) in political donations disguised as a share deal transacted by one of his aides (Joe Joseph writes). The allegations have contributed to recent edginess on Tokyo's financial markets. Some investors fear the scent of another financial scandal involving a top ruling party MP so soon after last year's Recruit bribes affair could bring new political chaos.

'Holocaust' charge

Ottawa (Reuters) — A man accused of kidnapping 3,000 Jews during the Second World War and transporting them out of Czechoslovakia against their will has become the third emigre to be charged under Canada's War Crimes Act. Mr Stephen Reistetter, aged 75, of Ontario, was arrested on Thursday. Mr Reistetter is charged with four counts of kidnapping Jews in two separate incidents in the town of Bedzin, in what was then Slovakia, and transporting them out of Czechoslovakia against their will to an unidentified location.

Suicide bid at camp

Hong Kong — Two Vietnamese boat people from one of Hong Kong's crowded detention centres were rushed to hospital yesterday after attempting to commit suicide in protest at plans to deport them and thousands of their countrymen to Vietnam (Jonathan Brandt writes). The suicide attempt, the first officially admitted to be linked to the policy of forced repatriation, came as the Hong Kong Government announced an investigation into allegations that staff at the same camp prevented a Vietnamese woman from giving birth by holding her legs together.

Key Palestinian is held by Israel

From Richard Owen, Jerusalem

In a move which dismayed the United States and angered Palestinians, Israeli police yesterday arrested Mr Faisal Husseini, a leading figure in the occupied territories who is viewed by many as the likely leader of any future Palestinian administration in the event of a peace settlement.

Western diplomats said the arrest was a blow to hopes for an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, because Mr Husseini in which he had appeared to condone the killing of Arab "collaborators" by Palestinian extremists, for whom the ground that such acts were unavoidable under a state of occupation.

Two members of Kach, the extremist Jewish organization, spat at Mr Husseini and punched his face, escaping into the crowd. The arrest, pending in

investigation of Mr Husseini, follows this week of five underground Palestinian activists during which Mr Husseini, aged 49, was named as a financial backer of the intifada.

Mr Husseini is accused of having given \$450 (£274) to five members of the banned Palestine Popular Army, for them to buy black uniforms.

The Attorney-General's office also said yesterday that it was investigating speeches by Mr Husseini in which he had appeared to condone the killing of Arab "collaborators" by Palestinian extremists, for whom the ground that such acts were unavoidable under a state of occupation.

Right-wing figures yesterday welcomed Mr Husseini's detention, but Peace Now, which favours dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization, said that the

arrest was a blow to chances of compromise.

The arrest of Mr Husseini follows several hardline statements recently by Mr Yitzhak Shamir, the Israeli Prime Minister, which have angered Washington at a time when it is trying to broker a settlement through talks between Israel and Egypt.

Earlier this week, Mr Shamir said that Israel would need to hold on to the occupied territories to provide room for the thousands of Soviet Jews now emigrating to Israel. Some senior US figures, notably Senator Robert Dole, have suggested that US aid to Israel, currently \$3 billion a year, should be cut. Mr Shamir yesterday told three US visitors that Israel needed increased US aid to cope with Soviet immigration.

Mr Yitzhak Rabin, the Defence Minister, said on his return from Washington yesterday that he had been assured that US aid would not be cut, although the State Department said it knew of no such assurances.

In another development, an Israeli colonel was yesterday charged by a military court of having ordered his men to injure arrested Palestinians from villages in the West Bank by "beating them until their bones were broken".

It is for his foreign ventures that his first year will be remembered. After an inactive first 100 days, he surprised the world with a bold disengagement proposal that united a divided Nato at last May's summit.

All great leaders need luck, and Mr Bush has had his share. He found himself President in the year that communism collapsed in the Soviet bloc. Resisting the temptation to dance on the Berlin Wall, he has prudently let events run their course and avoided undermining the position of President Gorbachov.

In October, disaffected Panamanian defence forces mounted an unsuccessful coup against General Noriega. Mr Bush was widely rebuked for withholding US support.



Mr Bush: Most popular US President since the war.

Cricket tour row

British sports legacy fails to conquer apartheid

From Gavin Bell
Johannesburg

In a school playing field near Johannesburg, an unusual cricket match is in progress. The bowler is white, the batsman is black, and the fielders are a mixture of both races. The game has been organized by the South African Cricket Union in an attempt to develop the sport in black townships and break down the barriers of apartheid. But when the last over is bowled, the children go their separate ways — to segregated neighbourhoods. The political reality of South Africa is reasserted.

The paradox is central to the future of the English cricket tour. The country's cricket administrators, led by Dr Ali Bacher, the cricket union managing director, argue that the sport has become a force for change to a post-apartheid society, and deserves the support of touring sides.

Their critics, notably the National Sports Congress, reject the township development programme as a

transparent attempt to counter opposition to international tours, and insist that far greater efforts are required to desegregate all sports.

Almost a century after being introduced to South Africa by British settlers, cricket remains essentially a white man's sport. Black players are few and far between. Relatively poor coaching and playing facilities for blacks are

perpetuated by a disparity of state funding on sport.

Generally, the current budget allocates roughly the same amount — about £2 million for the two race groups — but as there are four times as many blacks as whites, the per

capita spending is therefore proportionately smaller.

In theory, cricket became non-racial 10 years ago when the cricket union revised its constitution to allow for equal opportunities for all races. In practice, blacks remained without equipment, facilities, or coaching, and were unable to compete on an equal footing.

Dr Bacher says that in the past three years, the township programme has introduced 60,000 children to the game and 2,000 teachers have been instructed.

SACU has organized leagues in the townships, matches between white and black schools, and regular tournaments in which teams are mixed on a regional basis. White schools which refuse to play against blacks face being deprived of coaching and subsidies, and their players may not be eligible for any form of representative cricket. "We are a progressive force for change in South Africa and we need encouragement," says Dr Bacher.

"We do not believe, nor do we

want to portray, that South African society is normal. Apartheid exists on our statute books, but this does not mean that we cannot build for the future, for a post-apartheid society."

The English tour was not an attempt to whitewash the Pretoria Government, but part of the union's campaign to bring about change.

Last year, the Government announced a new policy under which the decision to participate in multi-racial sports was left to individual schools and parents' committees. Thus the door to non-racial sport is now open, but relatively few white schools and parents have been prepared to usher their children through it. An attempt by the mainly Indian and Coloured (mixed race) South African Cricket Board to start a pilot coaching programme in the eastern Cape is faltering due to lack of sponsors.

Mr Krish Naidoo, the National Sports Congress general-secretary, is unimpressed by the union's efforts and he condemns the cricket tour as an act of racism intended to serve a

small and predominantly white constituency.

Mr Naidoo does not share the

Hungarian leaders accused of spying on opposition

From Ernest Beck, Budapest

Members of the Hungarian Government and the ruling Hungarian Socialist Party regularly received secret surveillance reports on the activities and election strategy of opposition parties from the State Security Service of the Interior Ministry, according to a member of the service.

The disclosure, by Major József Vegvári, who yesterday revealed himself as the man who leaked the documents in the so-called Danubegate scandal, widens the scope of the bugging affair by implicating senior government and party members in the controversial Interior Ministry monitoring activities, which have been denounced as illegal and a violation of the new Constitution by opposition parties.

Since the scandal broke two weeks ago, the identity of Major Vegvári had been kept secret, and only certain documents detailing the bugging operation were given to the press in an effort to force the resignation of Mr István Horváth, the Interior Minister, and a reorganization of the State Security Service to place it under strict controls.

But as Mr Horváth has refused to voluntarily step down, Major Vegvári was presented to journalists in a

video interview and later at a news conference where he revealed a widespread and intricate network of covert intelligence-gathering methods which included tapping telephones, intercepting private post, bugging flats and having ministry moles pose as opposition party members.

The video showed a room, said to be at the Interior Ministry headquarters, where the information was collected. It also showed documents stamped "strictly secret", which were dated as recently as December 30, and listed those who attended opposition party meetings and election strategy sessions.

Major Vegvári said the information was discussed at Cabinet meetings and passed on to members of the Socialist Party who, he claimed, wanted to use the information to damage the opposition in the multi-party elections set for March 25.

"The party in power is fighting the last battle to keep as many people in power as possible," Major Vegvári said. Targets of the bugging included leading opposition figures from a wide range of parties, but no members of the Socialist Party. Major Vegvári said he could not reveal at present, the names of those



Budapest walkabout: President Mitterrand of France, who is on an official visit to Hungary, raises his hat to passers-by in the centre of the capital yesterday. Targets of the bugging included leading opposition figures from a wide range of parties, but no members of the Socialist Party. Major Vegvári said such activities were con-

tinuing. He painted a menacing picture of the Security Service, where he has worked for 25 years, saying it was rife with nepotism and about half of the 250 employees were in some way related to members

of the Socialist Party or its predecessor, the Hungarian Socialist Workers (communist) Party.

He also charged that the

service is continuing to de-

stroy documents related to the

and burned at secret locations in the countryside, Major Vegvári claimed.

It appears that Major Vegvári was moved by his conscience to leak the information because he felt that what he was doing violated the new democratic spirit in Hungary. "Political pluralism was legalized but nobody changed our rules and regulations," he told journalists.

Appearing tense and admitting that he feared for the safety of his family, Major Vegvári said he might be accused of treason, branded as a traitor, and be court-martialled, but he could not keep silent any longer about the "lies and illegal activities carried out on behalf of the party in power." He showed a written message found in a lift at the Interior Ministry which threatened that the person found to have leaked the documents will "die like a rat."

The Danubegate revelations have clearly shaken public confidence in the Government and have aroused fears that the election, the first free poll in Hungary in more than 40 years, cannot be fought fairly as long as remnants of the old communist regime, including Mr Horváth, still hold sensitive positions of power.

Communists in Yugoslavia try to repair image

From Dessa Trevisan and John Holland, Belgrade

The Yugoslav Central Committee met yesterday in last minute attempts to reconcile the feuding national factions and smooth the way to the Congress which opens today, amid deep divisions between the national communist parties and public indifference.

The Congress was first conceived by the Serbs at a time when Mr Slobodan Milošević, the Serbian leader, was sure that his centralist ideas would secure a majority of the delegates.

The Congress was intended to inject new blood into the party, which had been losing ground and found itself at the tail end of the reform trends throughout Eastern Europe.

A Yugoslav intellectual said that the party had become totally irrelevant, while the opposition parties were gaining in strength throughout the country.

Even Serbia, where pluralism has been until recently frowned upon, is now in the throes of rapid change. Mr Milošević, until recently unchallenged, appears to be losing much of his former popularity, and the communist party is shedding much of its earlier appeal as a rallying point of the nation.

A former Yugoslav Communist said: "The Congress will not be able to save the Communist Party, just as the Communist Party can no longer save the country."

The party has long ceased to

be a cohesive force, while opposition groups which have now entered the political scene are winning support.

From timid beginnings, they are becoming organized. In Slovenia, all alternative parties have formed a coalition bloc and are intent on taking over the power from the Communists in the elections which are due in April.

The Slovene Communists are clearly feeling the pressure from the opposition and will run in the next election under a new name as Party of the Democratic Renewal.

The word communism is no longer an attractive marketing item, but the change of name in Slovenia also has deeper meaning as the Slovene communists are distancing themselves from Marxism. They are assuming an image of social democracy, intent on attracting votes before the new Social Democratic Party, which was founded there recently, overtakes them.

In Serbia, several opposition parties have been founded in recent weeks. However, a radically anti-Communist party, which preaches extreme nationalism, seems to be gathering support.

In Croatia in less than a year, the opposition parties won more than 100,000 members, while as many Communists have quit the Yugoslav Communist Party in that time.

Leading article, page 13

Mongolia plans free elections

From Anne McElvoy, East Berlin

The isolated Asian republic of Mongolia, the oldest socialist country in the world after the Soviet Union, is considering holding free elections in an attempt to calm growing dissent, ADN, the East German news agency, reported yesterday.

In a report from Ulan Bator, the capital, the agency said that a draft law put forward by a group of deputies in the Hiral, the Mongolian Parliament, would extend the right of candidature to non-Communists for the first time in the country's history.

It provides for trade unions and other state groups to stand for Parliament, although ADN did not say whether this included the country's small opposition movement.

"The authors want to bring the running of the state closer to the people and make it more accountable," said Hugo Krupina, ADN's Mongolian correspondent. It also aims to reduce the role of the Mongolian Communist Party which is drifting away from reformist Moscow.

Ninety-five per cent of seats in the Parliament are occupied by the Communists and the other five need a Communist mandate as a prerequisite of their presence there. Only 10 per cent of the electorate are members of the Communist Party.

The unexpected suggestion of reform seems to be a response to recent demonstrations in Ulan Bator, organized by the Mongolian Democratic Union, a fledgling opposition

group including both workers and intellectuals.

Five thousand protesters took to the streets last Sunday to demonstrate against the Stalinist legacy in Mongolian affairs. The Government has since decreed that all demonstrations are subject to its prior approval and are not allowed to take place in the centre of town.

The authors of the proposed law support the setting up of a second parliament, named "the small state Hiral", to monitor the work of the main parliamentary body. It also wants deputies renamed as "envoys of the people" or "delegates of the people". ADN said the deputies concerned were trying to find local terms for "mandate" and "state" as the vocabulary of democracy is not yet represented in the Mongolian language.

The Government has already made one main concession to the opposition's demands by removing two statues of Stalin from the central square in the capital, but is insisting that the third and main statue of the dictator should remain.

Uma, the Communist Party newspaper, has criticized the Mongolian Democratic Union, era and Eastern European ideas unsuitable for Mongolia. The opposition is also demanding the prosecution of Mr Yangtsogtsog Tsendenbal, the former dictator, who ruled the country for 40 years before he was removed in 1984.

A free work of art for every reader.

This Sunday sees the launch of the 1990 Guide to the Arts, published by The Sunday Correspondent in association with the Arts Council. In four absorbing weekly parts, the Guide covers everything from opera to jazz, drama to dance, painted pictures to moving pictures. It includes profiles, interviews and exclusive ticket offers, and has a comprehensive calendar of all the major European arts events. Also this week, Stephen Hawking, author of the best-seller "A Brief History of Time", meets Firdaus Kanga, their conversation given added poignancy by the fact that both men are wheelchair-bound.

position

and burned at secret meetings in the countryside. Vaygani claimed.

It appears that Vaygani was moved by conscience to leak the information because he felt what he was doing violated "Political pluralism is legalized but methods change our rules and regulations," told journalists.

Appearing tense and shaken, he feared for the safety of his family. Vaygani said he might be accused of treason, branded a traitor and be imprisoned. He could no longer keep silent, but he could not carry out his plan because the "lies and illegal actions carried out on behalf of the party in power." He showed at the Interior Ministry who threatened that the press found to have leaked documents will "die in jail."

The Danubegate revelations have clearly shaken confidence in the Government and have aroused fear that the election, the first poll in Hungary in more than 40 years, cannot be fairly as long as remained the old communist regime, including Mr Horvath, who held sensitive positions in being.

esterday, by the constitutional chief secret investigation being

Bitter conflict between republics

Armenian village waits for Muslim onslaught

From Robin Lodge, Yeraskhavan, Soviet Union

Rifle fire rang out across the Armenian-Azerbaijani border yesterday, while a small Armenian village prepared to ward off attacks by Azerbaijani militants massed in nearby mountains.

In Yeraskhavan, hemmed in on two sides by the Turkish frontier and the border with Azerbaijan's province Nakhichevan, hundreds of Armenian volunteers with ageing shotguns and cartridge belts slung across their chests, stood around casually, making no attempt to return fire.

"They have got automatics, machine-guns and mortars while we just have our hunting guns – useless at this range," Mr Rustan Alexanyan said.

On Thursday, two local men were killed in two hours of fighting.

Behind Mr Alexanyan, three huge earthmoving trucks manoeuvred into position, their load carriers raised vertically as a shield.

"It is foggy now but yesterday we could see them clearly, swarming like ants over the mountainside all dressed in white camouflage against the snow," Mr Alexanyan said.

"There was a conflict yesterday, but the soldiers did not shoot at anyone – only into

the air," he said. Asked how he accounted for a crimson pool of blood frozen in the snow just outside the building commandeered by the troops, he said: "It may be blood, but perhaps it's paint. Let's go and take a look." Dipping a finger into the sticky congealing mess, he raised it to his face, sniffed and looked aghast.

Doctors at a hospital in Ararat, some nine miles from Yeraskhavan, confirmed that the sample taken from the pool was human blood.

In the same hospital, two of the wounded were being treated for bullet wounds. Each told the same story.

"I live in Ararat, but when we heard the shooting we all went to Yeraskhavan with our guns. The Azerbaijanis were shooting from the mountains. I was near the winery when I was wounded," Mr Artur Avakyan, aged 23, recounted.

The chief surgeon, Mr Vagashak Abramyan, said he had operated on one of them on Thursday night to remove shrapnel from his thigh and groin.

The other wounded man, Mr Armen Magakyan, aged 30, blood seeping from his bandaged right leg, said he thought about 60 Azerbaijanis armed with automatic rifles had taken part in the attack. He said the closest they had come was about 150 yards. "I heard this huge explosion near me and then I found myself here," he said.

There was no sign of troops on the road between the Armenian capital Yerevan and the Nakhichevan border. In Yeraskhavan, the only visible troops were guarding their billet.

They levelled their Kalashnikovs and took aim as journalists approached.

"We came here yesterday because of the difficult situation on the border," Lieutenant Belomysov said.

"Some of our people have now gone back, because the situation is under control."

After a fresh burst of fire around the hill, he conceded that it was not completely under control. "But they are only warning shots, fired into the air," he said. "There was no attack on the village."

(Reuters)

Let Muslims go, page 10



Airlift to safety: An elderly woman being helped out of an aircraft which had ferried refugees from Azerbaijan to Armenia.

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TIMES DIARY

SIMON BARNES

Melbourne

Here are a message for the doormen, ticket checkers and officials of Wimbledon, Lord's, the Stewards Enclosure at Henley and the Royal Enclosure at Ascot. You are not really trying at all. If you think you are good, then take a look at the great MCG, or Melbourne Cricket Ground. During the Australia-Pakistan Test match this week, they threw out the man who has every chance of being prime minister of Australia in a few months' time, Andrew Peacock, leader of the opposition Liberal Party. To give this magnificent effort even more weight, they threw him out in full knowledge of his identity. He just didn't have the right ticket, did he?

Dress, too, is important at the MCG. In the pavilion, it is all ties and jackets, just as it is at Lord's. The code for the members' enclosure is a little more complex: "Men wearing shorts must not wear shoes and socks, while the following are not permitted: shirts without collars, brief shorts, beachwear, rubber thongs, dilapidated shoes, bare tops, bare midriff, and stripping down to sunbathe after arrival." No doubt they will adopt these regulations for the Warner Stand next season.

The bizarre part of the Melbourne Test was its ghostly quality. It was a most intriguing match, close, exciting, violent, hotly contested. What more could anyone want? But hardly anyone came. Fewer than 9,000 showed up for the tense fourth day; the aggregate for the five days was only 61,537, and the place holds 100,000. Yet a floodlit one-dayer between Australia and Sri Lanka attracted 45,000. I asked Tony Greig, the former England captain turned Australian television pundit, what he thought about floodlit cricket: "I love it," he said. "Some people think it has gone too far, but I'd go further. The one-day game now subsidizes Test cricket. You cannot impose on a society something it doesn't want. It's like Real Tennis: I bet plenty of kings would not approve of tennis the way it is today."

Meanwhile, the Australian Open tennis championships are carrying on at Flinders Park just across the railway line from the MCG. The most shocking news — apart from the fact that a Brit, Sarah Loosmore, has gone beyond the second round — is that Ivan Lendl has a new hat, a kind of French Foreign Legion job. It is a funny hat, but, of course, Ivan is rather serious about it. "I think the tournament is about winning matches and doing your job, and the hat does its job. If I could do my job, as well as the hat does, I would be fine."

BARRY FANTONI



"I'll make him an offer, providing he leaves the paintings on the walls."

I wonder if Geoffrey Boycott is going to become the greatest cricket coach in history. Certainly few people have given as much thought to the art and science of batting, and the old boy now seems to have set his traditional secrecy aside. He has helped with the England team, and, impartially enough, he has helped Dan Jones to bat so well for Australia. "I told Jones that if he had my brains and his ability he would make a batsman," Boycott said. "I told him he got himself out more often than the bowlers did, and that's criminal." It won't be long before a Boycott old boy network dominates world cricket — well, if that ever happens, it will certainly raise the standards.

If you think the Commonwealth Games, which start in Auckland next weekend, have their political troubles, take a look at the Pan-American Games of next year. They will be held in Cuba. Already they have dropped one sport, ninepin bowling of all things, because they cannot get the equipment from the US. This is not the only problem to spring from the economic sanctions first imposed against Cuba in the Sixties. The Games people cannot get drug test equipment from the States either, and where would modern sport be without that? Furthermore, as things stand, coverage by the American TV network ABC is barred by law. However, the US is likely to have the largest contingent of athletes, apart from the host nation. I am sure there is logic behind all this, but it eludes me at present.

Oh dear! "Lord Denning speaks out" — and a *Times* leading article about sex.

I'm sure they're both right, of course. As to Lord Denning, his shock at events in Scotland is natural. The mere thought of entering the gay discotheques of Whitchurch, Hirstbourne Priory, and Wootton St Lawrence, and finding Lord Denning attempting the lambdas' outrages as much by its improbability as its impropriety. Any sneaking reflection that in such fantastic circumstances one might want to give the old boy an encouraging squeeze on the arm, rather than an admonitory slap in the face, must be banished almost before it is entertained.

As to *The Times*, it would be impertinent to tease. Those leading articles are guiding stars not just to the political but also to the personal side of one's life; and I

Armenians and Azerbaijanis plunge into national conflict, some Americans are still preoccupied with the Soviet threat. A writer in the *Los Angeles Times* this week warns his readers not to be fooled by the reports coming from the Soviet Union. The apparent relaxation of the Kremlin's grip is just a Machiavellian ploy, designed to get the West to drop its guard, so that the communists can take over.

This school of thought also has a few adherents in Britain. Those who see things that way are likely to find confirmation of their view in the deployment of Soviet forces in Azerbaijan. "Look! The tanks are moving in! Nothing has changed!"

In reality, the tanks are not there to impose communism but to try to avert anarchy, by suppressing a local civil war. In that respect, Gorbachov's move in Azerbaijan may be compared to the British government's decision, in 1969, to deploy troops in Northern Ireland.

Those who hope that the deployment of Soviet forces in Azerbaijan will soon bring peace to the area are likely to find the analogy with Northern Ireland very discouraging. It suggests that the troops are likely to be still in Azerbaijan, trying to keep

the peace, 20 years from now. However, I don't think they will be. I think they will be gone within five years, perhaps sooner. Not because a solution will have been found but because they will have given up, in the face of a far larger and more daunting problem that is in Northern Ireland.

When the troops leave, the Soviet Union may be gone along with them. Boris Yeltsin, the Kremlin dissident, said this week that the Soviet Union "could destroy itself within as little as three months". And it is in the southern region, Azerbaijan and Armenia, that the process of violent dissolution is most advanced. I fear it is likely to continue there and spread to other regions.

One major factor in spreading the contagion is likely to be Islam. Westerners, and also the Soviet media, see the role of the troops sent to Azerbaijan as primarily to protect Armenians against Azerbaijani violence. But

Muslims will see the Soviet government as having thrown its weight behind a Christian aggressor against a Muslim people.

In an article on this page on Wednesday an Azerbaijani politician was quoted as saying: "We are always punished when we retaliate against Armenian oppression." When I read that "always" I began to wonder about the events of 1915, as they appear in our Western history books. Are we now to believe that it was the Armenians who massacred the oppressed Turks, and not the other way round? I rather doubt this, but I don't doubt that Muslims, in the Soviet Union today, see Armenians as the aggressors.

This means that any Muslims who die — whatever the provocation — at the hands of the Soviet forces will appear as martyrs, slaughtered because of their religion by the enemies of their religion. A fertile theme for sacred eloquence in any mosque

with a militant mullah. And the old non-militant mullahs, controlled and monitored from Moscow, will be a dying breed under the new conditions. The ground is being prepared for a *jihad*, in addition to the Soviet Union's other afflictions.

It may be thought that this is too dark a picture. At various times during the past three decades a Muslim insurrection has been prophesied, but it never came about, not even after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. But in those earlier periods and even up to the beginning of this year, there was always a conviction that Moscow would use overwhelming force against any ethnic or national group attempting secession. This year, with the assurance to the Baltic republics that force would in no circumstances be used against them, secession by every republic has become an option.

For Muslims, secession from an infidel polity, if it is possible, becomes a duty. It is contrary to

God's will that infidels should rule over Muslims. It should be the other way round. In the old days, under Stalin and his successors, public dissemination of that basic Islamic principle was not allowed. But the advent of Gorbachov and *glasnost* undermined the old system of control. *Glasnost* in the mosques moves readily towards *jihad*.

It might reasonably be asked why, if secession is allowed, people should need to resort to *jihad*. But such cold logic is not applicable to most real-life secession situations. Most of these include conflicts between neighbours, disputes over boundaries, violent passions over "sacred" and "indefensible" patches of territory. The dissolution of the Soviet Union, however, the Kremlin tries to handle it, will be a messy and a bloody business.

Boris Yeltsin, who was very busy this week undermining Gorbachov, in preparation for the coming elections to the Supreme Soviet, has been urging

Peter Brimelow

Socialism in new guise

percentage points — but American state and local governments rushed in and filled the gap.

This still leaves the American economy considerably less government-dominated than the welfare states of Western Europe, of course. In 1987 EC governments spent an average of 51 per cent of national GNP, also a record. But both are far above the levels of 20 years ago.

Socialism is ultimately about political control of the economy. However, ownership is not necessary for control. Regulating the rent a landlord can charge redistributes resources without passing a cent through government accounts.

The level of government regulation in the economy is difficult to measure. One traditional method used by US economists has been to count the annual number of pages in the Federal Register, in which all federal agency decrees have to be recorded. By late 1980, this number was growing exponentially — quadruple that of ten years earlier, itself a peace-time record, and heading straight up.

Now, when you plot it on a graph, it looks like the Matterhorn — but a Matterhorn connected to a jagged mountain range about two-thirds up on the right. Regulatory activity did apparently drop under Reagan, but only to mid-1970s levels. Currently, it is on an upward jag.

Even businesses, with varying degrees of surliness, seemed to assume an implicit theory of history that ran from *laissez-faire* in the Garden of Eden to nationalization, planning and price control in the Gethsemane of Callaghan and Carter. Curiously, this was probably the exact reverse of the truth. The earliest known writing, the Code of Hammurabi, is largely a list of controlled prices.

Today, such faith apparently survives in its pristine form only in Southern Africa. "I think they all see that communism is the wave of the future," a young (white) South African financial journalist said of her colleagues two years ago in Johannesburg. She was surprised that I was surprised.

But if socialism is dead, why won't it die down?

The classical definition of socialism is the government ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. And at first glance, there is not a lot of it in the America of George Bush.

Recently, however, I took a look in *Forbes* at some other measures of the government's role. The picture was much more mixed. In 1987, the last year for which we could get good statistics, government spending as a proportion of gross national product was nearly 37 per cent, about as high as it had ever been in peacetime. Spending by the federal government did reach a peacetime peak in 1983, under the alleged budget-cutter Ronald Reagan. Subsequently it fell — although by only a couple of

percentage points — but American state and local governments rushed in and filled the gap.

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But if socialism is dead, why won't it die down?

The classical definition of socialism is the government ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. And at first glance, there is not a lot of it in the America of George Bush.

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percentage points — but American state and local governments rushed in and filled the gap.

This still leaves the American economy considerably less government-dominated than the welfare states of Western Europe, of course. In 1987 EC governments spent an average of 51 per cent of national GNP, also a record. But both are far above the levels of 20 years ago.

Socialism is ultimately about political control of the economy. However, ownership is not necessary for control. Regulating the rent a landlord can charge redistributes resources without passing a cent through government accounts.

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Conor Cruise O'Brien on the religious threat facing Gorbachov

First set the Muslims free

the pouring on of more *perestroika* as a panacea. But *perestroika*, even if available, could not hold the Soviet Union together. The idea that economic advances promote inter-ethnic and other religious harmony is an illusion. The most prosperous of India's communities are the Sikhs of the Punjab, and these are also the most given to religious and political violence.

The Soviet Union — whether it retains that name or not — will probably be reduced to Russia proper along with the Ukraine and Byelorussia in some kind of federation, or confederation, of equal states. That core area, plus Georgia, has reasonable prospects. In much of the rest of the Soviet Union, life — especially for minorities — is likely to be worse than it was under communism.

Unfortunately, the attempt to avert anarchy by military means, under present conditions in the Soviet Union, is likely to accelerate the anarchy and spread it. Gorbachov should stop trying to save areas that cannot be saved, and should concentrate his energies on the core area. He is going to have his work cut out if he is to save Russia itself from reverting into barbarism.

The expert touch in danger of extinction

Dudley Fishburn believes the growing pressure to confine MPs to the parliamentary grindstone would be counter-productive



cal. But in someone else's it may not be. So be it. The one thing to avoid, as is now being suggested, is more rules to prescribe what is ethical and what is not. Judgement is in the head or it is nowhere. Consider what has happened in Congress. Complicated rules have been drawn up which invite congressmen to abandon the still small voice of individual conscience for a code of practice. So long as they are operating within the rules, all's well. Indeed, Jim Wright, Speaker of the House of Representatives until his recent resignation for corruption, defended himself by claiming that he went up to the limits of the rule book, but not beyond them. If ethics come to this, we are in trouble indeed.

It is also, in my view, unethically to insist that the outside job or interest has fallen into dispute with the growth of lobbying. The Commons rattles with stories of MPs who are paid to ask questions to promote this change in the law or that policy. "Dear Minister, I represent Consolidated International. Please give me the documents." — that, apparently, is the kind of correspondence now winging its way around Whitehall at the behest of lobbyists who have paid MPs to represent them. That sounds a rather miserable way of earning a living. It is not in any way an outside interest; it is, rather the contrary, inside tinkering.

The rules at Westminster

will be a militant mullah. And the old non-militant mullahs, controlled and monitored from Moscow, will be a dying breed under the new conditions. The ground is being prepared for a *jihad*, in addition to the Soviet Union's other afflictions.

It may be thought that this is too dark a picture. At various times during the past three decades a Muslim insurrection has been prophesied, but it never came about, not even after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. But in those earlier periods and even up to the beginning of this year, there was always a conviction that Moscow would use overwhelming force against any ethnic or national group attempting secession. This year, with the assurance to the Baltic republics that force would in no circumstances be used against them, secession by every republic has become an option.

For Muslims, secession from an infidel polity, if it is possible, becomes a duty. It is contrary to

No, you could never blackmail me

MATTHEW PARRIS

I await the anonymous telephone call. "Meester Parris? Thees ees the Red Scorpion. Unless you wish us to publish the Tory Conference Handbook linking your name with the Conservative Group for Homosexual Equality, then you will write four parliamentary sketches this month ridiculing Mrs Thatcher."

"Click — Brit Rats! And I had only planned to write three."

I suppose there was a time when I really was (theoretically) blackmailable. That was after I joined the Foreign Office but before it struck me that you only live once. Of course I should never have joined. After Cambridge, MI6 had already offered me a job as a spy and "positively vetted" me, and if that didn't suggest I was a security risk, then what would?

Besides I should have reflected on the fact that, were my private

life more public, I might be sacked — and decided then and there to forsake my choice of career. Oddly enough I decided to stick to my career-choice, and keep quiet about my private life: an eccentric decision, quite out of accord with human nature, which probably arose from not having read enough newspaper editorials. Few would react like this.

But I could not have been blackmailed, even then. I could not be blackmailed now. That is because I believe in justice, and accept as just a country which, for its part, accepts me; and which I, in turn, accept me. A very good-looking Bulgarian diplomat approached me at a north London party given by a mutual friend in the Foreign Office, and asked me if I would give him a lift in my car to the Cromwell Road. I agreed.

He sat rather too close. That is how I knew he had terrible breath. His assignment failed! There is a lesson, here, for the Bulgarian intelligence authorities. Some months later he sent to the Foreign Office security people. I handed it immediately to the Foreign Office security people.

pouring on of more pressure, even if available, could not hold the Soviet Union together. The idea that economic and other religious harmony is an illusion. The most prosperous of India's communities are the Sikhs of the Punjab, and these are also the most given to religious and political violence.

The Soviet Union - whether it probable to be reduced to Russia and its electorate in some kind of federation, or confederation, of states. That core area, plus Georgia, has reasonable prospects of the rest of the Soviet Union, life - especially in minorities - is likely to be worse than it was under communism, since anarchy is worse than communism.

Unfortunately, the attempt to restore the Soviet Union by military means, under present conditions in the Soviet Union, is likely to accelerate the anarchy and spread it. The areas that cannot be saved, I should concentrate his efforts on the core area. He is trying to have his work cut out if he is to save Russia itself from falling into barbarism.

Below

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intage points - but American and local governments in and filled the gap, is still less than the American army considerably less government-dominated than the states of Western Europe, of course. In 1987 EC governments spent an average of 10% of national GNP, found. But both are far the levels of 20 years ago, when it is estimated about 10% of the economy, not ownership, is not necessary to regulate the standard of living without government through government.

Level of government ion in the economy is to increase. One method used by US officials is to count the number of places in the Register, in which all agencies have to be found. In 1980, this was growing exponentially, so that after ten years, it took a year and a half to catch up, when it reached 100,000. This was a major achievement, but a tremendous amount of work still remains on the register. It is not a drop in the ocean, to be sure, but it is a significant improvement.

Improvement is a result of the introduction of a new system of

businesses in the US, which makes the process easier. The system is now in place, and it is working well. The government is now in a better position to regulate the economy, not ownership, is not necessary to regulate the standard of living without government through government.

This said, however, it was no light matter for 26 Tory MPs to vote against approving the level of central funding for local councils, or for 31 of them to vote against the mechanism for distributing the grant. What is more, the rebels were drawn from both right and left of the party and included many who are convinced Thatcherites and market supporters. The Government got its majorities because the general political risks of any failure to do so would have been too frightful for Tory MPs to contemplate.

Ministers can have no illusion, therefore, that they have necessarily heard the last of the controversy over what they prefer to call the community charge. It has, from the outset, been fraught with difficulties and even its best friends cannot say that it was conceived as a platonically perfect ideal mechanism for raising local taxation.

It began, in fact, as an expedient. Its origin was in Mrs Thatcher's personal commitment to get rid of the unfair system of rates and to find a better way. Her original disposition had been to favour some sort of local income tax, but the Layfield committee had concluded in 1976 that this was not feasible.

The concept was therefore devised of a community charge levied on all individuals, with reduced liability for poorer people who secure a rebate through the social security system. Local authorities should therefore be more responsive to the poll tax payers while those who pay the charge have every reason to call their local councils to account for their spending habits. To rescue businesses (without any voting power) from being driven away

Children's needs

From Mrs Charles D. Brandreth

Sir, I would like to express my complete agreement with Mrs Douglas-Pennant's opinion (January 3) on the needs of children being considered when plans are being made for extending child-care facilities.

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Day care covers the period outside the regular school hours - i.e., from 7.30 a.m. - 5.30 p.m. Most of the children I tutor have

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When told that the extra income thus earned provides luxuries that they would not otherwise enjoy - very often "summer camp" which American children love - they all with one voice say they would rather have Mum at home - and be at home.

These are children of an age to understand why an extra income might be needed. What about the under-sizes, who are unable to express their views?

Yours faithfully,
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1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone: 01-782 5000

THE MARSHAL'S LEGACY

For the first time since Marshal Tito's death 10 years ago, there will be genuine popular interest in the outcome of the congress of Yugoslavia's League of Communists. The congress, which opens today, is the sole remaining forum for the six parties of the federal republic's fractious national community.

Unfortunately, the attempt to restore the League by military means, under present conditions in the Soviet Union, is likely to accelerate the anarchy and spread it. The areas that cannot be saved, I should stop trying to save, and concentrate his efforts on the core area. He is trying to have his work cut out if he is to save Russia itself from falling into barbarism.

Below

This, the League's 14th extraordinary congress, may well be the last. So numerous and inexorable are the centrifugal forces which are now loosening the ties between the Serbs and the smaller nationalities, that a multiple divorce of the constituent parts of the Titoist movement now seems more likely than not. Whether a break-up of the federal party brings the disintegration of Yugoslavia itself in train depends very much on one man.

Whether Mr Slobodan Milosevic, the Serbian party leader, has been a blessing for his country is open to doubt. His followers - who turn out in their hundreds of thousands to cheer his fiery oratory - claim that he has prevented the murder or expulsion from Kosovo by the Albanian majority of the region's Serbian inhabitants. His critics, including most of the non-Serbian population, see him as a dangerous demagogue, who has whipped up enthusiasm for a "Greater Serbia" and manipulated the ancient hostility towards Islam in order to establish Serbian supremacy: not only over the Yugoslav Albanians, but also the richer and more Western republics of Slovenia and Croatia.

More objective observers would scarcely deny that he is an authoritarian communist of the old school with aspirations to assume the mantle of Tito. Mr Milosevic has, to say the least, failed to discourage millions of Serbs from hanging his portrait alongside the Marshal's, or even in place of it. The cult of the personality apart, however, the Serbian leader has yet to show any achievements comparable to Tito's.

If this weekend he refuses to budge to the wishes of his Slovene and Croatian comrades for the transformation of the Communist League into a social democratic platform on which to fight multi-party elections, he may tear Yugoslavia apart. This would be a recipe for the Albanianization of Serbia: a strange prospect for Mr Milosevic to offer his people.

Should Mr Milosevic decide after all not to

provoke the dismemberment of Yugoslavia, free elections will have to be announced this weekend, signalling the end of the party's hold on power. Amid the turmoil elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, yet another abandonment of the communist monopoly of power may seem both belated and unsurprising. Yet there was more to Titoism than communism alone.

Part of that legacy is a legend of civilian suffering, military heroism and ultimate victory over the Germans and their Croat allies. The Army still sees itself as the guardian of Titoism, and in recent days there has been sabre-rattling from officers who rightly scent decay in the mausoleum to defunct theories which Yugoslavia has become.

Alone, the generals would have little chance of imposing military rule for long, but if Mr Milosevic chose to align himself with them, a civilian facade might be maintained. Since Slovenes and Croats, at least, would not tolerate such a regime, the country might easily be plunged into a civil war which could only end in the amputation of its healthiest limbs.

Fortunately, such a bloody scenario is still unlikely. It serves, however, as a reminder of the sinister side of the Marshal's legacy - one which has tended to be forgotten during the past 10 chaotic years of jockeying for position among the pygmies who succeeded him.

Yugoslavia today is a divided and intolerant society. Its ruined economy suffers from hyper-inflation, negative returns on capital investment, heavy dependence on the meagre earnings of returning Yugoslav "guest workers", whose jobs in West Germany are now being taken by Germans from the East. Tito's secret police and his unscrupulous methods of destroying opposition did not die with him: it is no accident that Mr Milosevic is presently conducting the only show trials in Europe. Painful as it must be for a country to face the truth about its patriarch, the time has come for Yugoslavia to consign Titoism to history and emerge from his shadow.

There are signs that Serbs, as well as other Yugoslavs, understand the need to build on the positive aspects of the Marshal's legacy: the preservation of a viable federal state. Mr Milosevic would not be the right man to carry the torch.

MAKING IT WORK

The long poll tax marathon in Parliament is over. The Conservative whips have successfully twisted the arms of enough of their potential backbench rebels and ministers can again breathe freely. If, in Disraeli's classic dictum "one is enough" for parliamentary power, then the majorities of 46 and 36 which the Government secured on Thursday for the arrangements for the amount and distribution of Exchequer money to local authorities were ample.

This said, however, it was no light matter for 26 Tory MPs to vote against approving the level of central funding for local councils, or for 31 of them to vote against the mechanism for distributing the grant. What is more, the rebels were drawn from both right and left of the party and included many who are convinced Thatcherites and market supporters. The Government got its majorities because the general political risks of any failure to do so would have been too frightful for Tory MPs to contemplate.

Ministers can have no illusion, therefore, that they have necessarily heard the last of the controversy over what they prefer to call the community charge. It has, from the outset, been fraught with difficulties and even its best friends cannot say that it was conceived as a platonically perfect ideal mechanism for raising local taxation.

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from high-rated districts the uniform business rate is to be levied and then distributed over the country.

Both devices have attracted much criticism. As a result, the increases from the uniform business rate will be limited over the first five years. But while industry, in many areas (usually Labour-controlled) which were overcharged will now benefit, businesses in other areas, notably in the South-east, will be worse off. There will be winners but also losers.

With the community charge on individuals the principal concession has been to soften the initial impact of the new system by a redistribution of the Government's grant to benefit the areas likely to be hardest hit - which are mostly Labour-controlled. This, however, will be largely at the expense of Tory areas. Local authorities will be allowed to spend 11.1 per cent more next year, including 8.5 per cent more money coming from central government and from the business rate.

But under the safety net arrangements, low spending authorities (most of them Tory) which would otherwise gain substantially by the community charge, will have to forgo half that gain in the first year. Government funding allowing them to benefit in full only takes effect in the second year - which is part of the reason for Tory resentment.

Far from being a clear and perfect system, therefore, the community charge is one that has had to be trimmed by expediency and patched by compromise. Its political effect is still to be felt and the local council elections in May will be the first indicator. Tories should recognize, however, as Mr Norman Tebbit observed in the Commons this week, that this is the future system of local government and that it is at least no more unfair than the old rating system.

On the other hand, its details are not sacrosanct. The sensible thing to do now is to accept the system and see how it works. It will still be possible for the Government to deal with any adverse side-effects if this is necessary in the next year or two.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Irradiation as health hazard

From Sir Julian Rose

Sir, It is to be greatly regretted that the Lords have failed to bring the Government to its senses concerning the proposal to introduce food irradiation techniques into this country (report, January 12).

It should be readily apparent that this is a "high-tech" attempt to paper over the rapidly widening cracks of our modern food production techniques. Food irradiation marks the zenith of misguided technical "fixes" for problems that have to be tackled via a bold and possibly radical reappraisal of the way we produce, handle and distribute our food.

When 60 per cent of chicken carcasses in shops and 50 per cent of raw pork sausages are found to be partially infected with salmonella or listeria, it is the height of irresponsibility to proclaim that the only solution is to sterilize the offending products with powerful doses of gamma radiation.

Soft cheese, chicken and pork have formed the ingredients of many household diets for generations. It is evidently the "increasing sophistication of systems of production and processing" that lies behind the steep rise in incidents of often severe food poisoning now being detected.

Consumer trends are moving strongly towards fresh, flavoursome, unadulterated foods, preferably grown without recourse to agrochemicals and growth-forcing techniques. Many would prefer to buy this produce locally, before it has gone through the debilitating mass distribution network.

If they could, their chances of being affected by listeria, salmonella or most other sources of food poisoning would be considerably lessened and their general health greatly improved.

Yours faithfully,
JULIAN ROSE,
Path Hill Farm Cottage,
Goring Heath,
Near Reading, Oxfordshire.
January 14.

Fears of dying alone in hospital

From Ms Marjorie Wallace

Sir, I read with interest your article "Case for kid gloves" (Health, January 11), about the efforts of the National Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital to ease the anxiety of young patients by allowing their mothers to stay with them.

I still remember, as a child of five, the desperation I felt when my parents left me in hospital for the night. But on the various occasions when my own four children have needed hospital treatment mothers have been permitted - even expected - to be there at all times. There is no doubt the difference it made.

But it is not only children who become frightened and depressed when they are left alone in hospital. Could we not extend the same humanity to older people who are seriously or dangerously ill? Why should they face their hardest moments alone, suddenly and often brutally removed from the presence of their partner, family or friend?

A few weeks ago my mother spent five weeks in hospital suffering a series of strokes from which she died. She had been an adventurous and courageous woman, but she dreaded, as many do, being in hospital at the moment when visitors leave, the car doors shut and they drive

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SATURDAY JANUARY 20 1990

Executive Editor
David Brewerton

THE POUND

US dollar
1.6455 (-0.0005)W German mark
2.8121 (+0.0032)Exchange index
68.1 (same)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 Share

1888.0 (+3.6)

FT-SE 100

2335.0 (-1.9)

USM (Datamstream)

157.30 (+0.17)

Market report, page 20

Birch leads new trust from BZW

Mr Philip Birch, chairman of Ward White until its hostile takeover by Boots last August, is chairman of a new trust from Barclays de Zoete Wedd. BZW is making its first foray into the investment trust market with a trust linked to UK convertibles.

The BZW Convertible Investment Trust aims to raise £70 million from institutions and individuals.

Subscriptions opened yesterday, and close on January 30. Dealings are due to begin on February 8. A full prospectus will appear in *The Times* on Monday and the prospects will be analysed in the *Tempus* column of that morning.

• A series of rights issues are likely to come from investment trust companies in the next few weeks, in an effort to bring premiums down. A number of European investment trusts are also on the way. Family Money, page 23

STOCK MARKETS

New York: Dow Jones 2874.27 (+7.89)

Tokyo: Nikkei Average 36838.54 (+107.08)

Hong Kong 2776.29 (+4.62)

Singapore: Sgx 113.8 (+0.4)

Sydney: ASX 1573.9 (-3.9)

Frankfurt: DAX 1772.58 (-0.61)

Brussels: General 6449.04 (-7.81)

Paris: CAC 40 553.08 (-0.47)

Zurich: Ska 6127.4 (-6.0)

London: FT-A All-Share n/a

FT-SE 500 2760 (-13.5)

FT-Gold Mines 329.4 (-3.6)

FT-Fixed Interest 91.50 (-1.89)

FT-Govt Secs 51.58 (+0.54)

Recent issues Page 18

Closing prices Page 21

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

RISES: A McAlpine 954p (+13p)

Guinness 676p (+13p)

Allied Irish 278p (+12p)

Savoy Hotel 'A' 707.5p (+50p)

Holland Simon 857.75p (+10p)

Hoskins Group 327.75p (+55p)

Logica 342.25p (+18p)

Microfocus 512.25p (+10p)

RHM 449.5p (+12p)

Ling Plastics 245p (+10p)

Santander 245p (+10p)

Euro Co Louisiana 284.1p (+10p)

LASMO 574.5p (+11p)

Henderson Admin 815p (+10p)

FALLS: Securicor 925p (-10p)

Welcom 703.5p (-22p)

Reches 507.5p (-14.5p)

Dale Electric 90p (-12p)

PKE 158p (-27p)

Closing prices 251.11

SEAO Volume 391.00

INTEREST RATES

London: Bank Base 15%

3-month interbank 15.1% - 15.1%

3-month eligible 14.1% - 14.1%

Federal Funds 81.4%

3-month Treasury Bills 7.7% - 7.7%

30-year bonds 9.7% - 9.7%

CURRENCIES

London: New York £1.6455

2.8121 (+0.0032)

\$ 2.14932 (\$ 1.7955)

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Agreed link will strengthen financial muscle for joint ventures

French to lift McAlpine stake

By Matthew Bond

Alfred McAlpine has become the latest construction company to bring a European partner to its share register to beef up its financial muscle.

Dumez, the French construction group, is to increase its present 4.7 per cent stake to 12 per cent, the maximum agreed with the McAlpine board. M Jean-Paul Parayre, Dumez's president, has been invited to join the McAlpine board.

At current share prices, Dumez's investment would be

worth more than £14 million. The move cement a co-operation agreement reached by the two companies, the main effect of which will be to allow McAlpine to pursue larger construction contracts in Britain, while offering Dumez a way into the British construction market.

Mr Bobby McAlpine, the chairman, welcomed the deal. "This agreement will enable us to tackle larger projects which might not have been practicable on our own, and will enable us to pursue more

vigorously the partially or completely privately funded developments where contractors are increasingly being asked to take part in the financing."

The partners will also be looking for new opportunities in the United States and in minerals. Jean Lefebvre, Dumez's road building associate, is also party to the agreement.

The partners say that the agreement will operate to "a more limited extent" in continental Europe.

The increasing need for

construction companies to be able to draw on greater internal resources – particularly for infrastructure projects – has prompted both agreed deals, along the line of yesterday's, and more hostile solutions, such as the bid for Higgs and Hill by YJ Lovell.

Those opting for the agreed route with a continental partner include Birsle, which last year revealed an agreement with Bilfinger & Berger, the West German group, as part of its flotation strategy.

B&B took a 15 per cent

stake in the company. Meanwhile, Hochtief, another West German group, has a 23 per cent stake in Rush & Tompkins.

Other continental groups have opted for greater degree of control.

Société Générale d'Entreprise, the French company, last year took a 52 per cent stake in Norwest Holt, while Hollandsche Beton Groep, the Dutch group, has taken over Kyle Stewart and Edmund Nuttall, two private British companies.

Static profits at David Smith

By Colin Campbell

David S Smith (Holdings), the packaging and paper group over which bid clouds have long loomed, warns of difficult short term trading conditions and of greater pressure on margins in the second six months of its current financial year.

In the six months ended October 28, the group recorded a turnover of £181.4 million compared with £166.4 million, but only a modest increase in pre-tax profits from £15.7 million to £15.8 million.

At the operating level, profits were £18.6 million (£1.7 million), but the interest payable charge jumped from £1.52 million to £3.08 million. The group says it should benefit from any increased demand from an environmentally conscious market.

Its Kemsey project is heavily involved in re-cycled material, and there have been additional developments in the field of waste paper.

In time, benefits of plant refurbishment and the completion of other projects – which have yet to reach full profitability – will be evident.

David S Smith will continue to place emphasis on expanding its specialist packaging

However, "in the short term, the trading position looks more difficult than for some time, and lower levels of demand and a less certain economic climate are giving rise to greater pressure on margins," the board says.

Meanwhile, the directors are maintaining the interim dividend at 2.75p a share.

David S Smith shares initially shed 5p to 32.8p, although later traded only 1p down at 32.8p.

Linter seeks debt moratorium

From Our Correspondent, Sydney

Mr Abe Goldberg's Linter Group, Australia's largest textile and clothing company, was yesterday seeking a moratorium on more than Aus\$700 million (£352 million) of debt.

Mr Goldberg is known in Britain as instigator of two bid attempts for Tootal, the textile group, in 1985 and again early last year. His unwelcome advances were foiled after Coats Viyella entered the fray with its own merger proposal. Mr Goldberg accepted Coats's offer for his 24.5 per cent stake in Tootal and walked away with a £7 million profit.

But 1989 did not end so happily, and the fate of Linter now hangs on two emergency meetings next week with its bankers. Mr Goldberg will speak to anxious creditors in Melbourne on Tuesday and Sydney on Wednesday after admitting that Linter was facing "significant losses" this year and was unable to meet its debts. Linter, a private company, sports some of

Several of its 40 lenders are believed to be on the verge of calling in loans, which could force it into receivership or provisional liquidation. Central to the banks' worries are millions of dollars in loans channelled by Linter to Brick and Pipe, the building materials producer Mr Goldberg acquired last June for Aus\$390 million.

Linter executives were unavailable to comment yesterday, but KPMG Peat Marwick Hungerford, the accountant, confirmed it had prepared a report on Linter's finances.

Major lenders include ANZ, Westpac, National Australia Bank, and overseas institutions. In a letter to bankers, Mr Goldberg said Peat Marwick had found a "substantial deficiency" of assets against liabilities, after providing for losses on loans to associated companies.



Abe Goldberg: preparing to face anxious creditors

Bond receivership a 'wicked injustice'

From David Tweed, Sydney

Bond Brewing Holdings' plunge into receivership was a "wicked injustice" which had caused irreparable and incalculable damage to the company and its subsidiaries, the Victorian Supreme Court was told.

Mr Allan Myers, QC, for Bond Brewing, said, in his closing address yesterday, that Mr Justice Beach had been misled by not being given all the details relating to Bond Brewing's loan agreement with a bank syndicate which had an Aus\$880 million (£426.5 million) exposure to Bond Brewing.

He also said the appointment of receivers should not have been made as an indefinite order, but as an interim order only so as to preserve the value of the assets.

The court is nearing the end of the third week's hearing into applications

by Bond Corporation Holdings, the Bond Brewing parent company, to have the appointment of Mr David Crawford and Mr Charles Fear as receiver-managers set aside.

A receiver was appointed on December 29 at the request of the National Australia Bank (NAB).

Santiago (Reuters) – The Chilean Telephone Company (CTC), whose majority shareholder is Mr Alan Bond, reported a profit of \$95.6 million (£53.3 million) in 1989, up from \$63.5 million the previous year. Mr Mark Habidge, the chief executive,

said, CTC revenues grew to \$268.6 million from \$209.3 million in 1988. Bond Corp Chile holds a 51 per cent stake in the company. CTC invested \$200 million in 1989 and installed 188,292 new telephone lines at a rate of five-year \$1.3 billion expansion.

and have a receiver appointed, that would be a very extraordinary thing.

"The fact of your Honour's order is even worse than requiring us to pay the Aus\$880 million because all of our assets are subject to the order.

"The order has worked a wicked

injustice to Bond Brewing and it's

subsidary companies. It has caused irreparable and incalculable damage to these companies."

Mr Myers told Mr Justice Beach he had been misled on matters of law and fact.

The granting of *ex parte* orders also carried a heavy responsibility on the party seeking the order to present all information.

"It was *prima facie* improper to obtain an *ex parte* order," Mr Myers said.

Mr Justice Beach said it was at his discretion whether he could appoint an *ex parte* receiver. He told Mr Myers there was a British law case where an unsecured creditor had a receiver appointed.

"This court can appoint the receiver whenever it thinks it is just or convenient to do so," Mr Justice Beach said.

The hearing continues on Monday.

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لهم اعن الضرر

American Medical reports £50m loss

By Melinda Wittstock

American Medical International Corp has reported a first quarter pre-tax loss of \$22.6 million (£14.02 million) after charging \$128.2 million in one-off merger costs.

The pre-tax loss for the three months to end-November compares to a \$640,000 pre-tax profit in the same period in 1988, which included \$13 million in additional medical malpractice provisions and \$1 million in lease buyout costs.

American Medical managed to increase its net turnover by 12.6 per cent to \$72.8 million. It reported a net after-tax loss of \$33.7 million, against \$440.000 profit last time, as well as a loss per share of 76 cents (1 cent earnings).

American Medical is talking to a number of would-be buyers for its 65 per cent stake in AMI Healthcare, its British private hospital subsidiary, as part of a plan to sell off all foreign assets after a recent \$3 million buyout led by IMA Acquisition Corporation.

Mr Harry Gray, the chairman and chief executive, said the results showed a strong cashflow before merger costs. He is confident American Medical will generate enough cash to service its £1.4 million debt and fund capital expenditure. It managed to reduce costs by 22.7 per cent.

The group has so far sold one hospital in Florida and another in Singapore, while putting up 12 other US acute care and psychiatric hospitals for sale. Mr Gray said negotiations were proceeding well for the sale of its AMI Healthcare stake.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Lovell 'facing defeat' in Higgs and Hill bid

The hard-fought £162 million battle for control of Higgs and Hill closes at 1pm today, with the bidder, YJ Lovell, the fellow building contractor, facing apparent defeat. Sir Brian Hill, the Higgs chairman, said he was "quietly confident", with expressions of support from significantly more than 25 per cent of his shareholders. The higher of the two offers values each Higgs share at almost 482p, against a market price of 413p yesterday.

Mr Tony Williams, building analyst at UBS-Phillips & Drew, said: "They are not going to get it. The logic of the share price movements, with Lovell going up and Higgs going down, points to the conclusion that they are not going to get control." The bid had been "a bit too big and a bit too ambitious" for Lovell at this stage in its development, he believed. The company's error had been not to bid enough and not to offer a full cash alternative.

LPA sparks to £871,000

Serif Cowells in £2m deal

LPA Industries, the industrial electrical accessories company, lifted pre-tax profits by 7.5 per cent to £871,000 in the year to September, on turnover up 12.3 per cent to £74.5 million. Earnings per share rose from 6.6p to 6.40p, and the final dividend is improved from 1.6p to 1.7p, making 3.2p for the year, compared with 3p. The net asset per share climbs from 54.34p to 59.03p.

Texaco up to \$2.4bn

Texaco, whose British subsidiary, Texaco UK, is a big producer from the North Sea and has the fourth largest share of the British petrol market, reports that worldwide net income for the fourth quarter of 1989 slipped to \$287 million (£174.6 million), or 99 cents per share, compared with \$296 million (£1.21) in 1988. However, net income for the year climbed to \$2.41 billion (£9.12) compared with \$1.3 billion (£5.35).

Fourth-quarter results for 1989 included charges of \$355 million for the establishment of financial reserves relating to the company's environmental programmes as well as a reduction in the valuation of an investment in an offshore California production facility.

Dale Electric profits hit

DC Cook falls to £401,000

Dale Electric, the power system manufacturer, has seen its pre-tax profits fall to £210,000 from £2.1 million at the interim stage to October. Turnover improved from £24.2 million to £29.9 million in the period but pressure on overseas margins and high interest charges had an adverse effect. The interim dividend stays at 2p on earnings per share of 3.66p (6.14p).

Low & Bonar link-up

Low & Bonar, the Scottish packaging and specialist textiles group, has set up a joint venture with the Constantia Group of Austria, creating a link with one of Europe's big packaging groups. Bonar Constantia, a jointly-owned company, will own L&B's flexible packaging business interests together with Constantia Group's British subsidiary, Teich Aluminium.

This deal involves L&B selling technology, a stake in the period to 26.3 million. No interim dividend (1.33p) will be paid, on earnings per share of 0.94p compared with 9.08p last time. Its USM shares were unchanged at 41p.

RECENT ISSUES

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• Stock market comment: The general situation in the stock market can be found by ringing 0898 141 220. Items of company news are available by dialling 0898 141 221, while the prices of shares that are actively trading in the market may be found by ringing 0898 121 225.

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See main listing for Water shares

RIGHTS ISSUES

Audio Fidelity N/P 1/14

Cook (Wimpey) 22-2

Medrache N/P 102-1

(Issue price in brackets.)

ADVERTISING IN

THE TIMES

First Dealings Last Dealings Last Declaration For Settlement

January 8 January 19 April 5 April 17

Companies were listed in 1989/90 Annual Day, Atlantic Resources, Babcock, Cookson, Ferranti, ICI, Highland Distillers, Lancia, Searle, Rolls-Royce, Sempermova.

TRADITIONAL OPTIONS

First Dealings Last Dealings Last Declaration For Settlement

January 8 January 19 April 5 April 17

Companies were listed in 1989/90 Annual Day, Atlantic Resources, Babcock, Cookson, Ferranti, ICI, Highland Distillers, Lancia, Searle, Rolls-Royce, Sempermova.

ADVERTISING IN

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Serif & Cowells in £2m deal

Serif & Cowells, the US game distributor which markets Travel Pursuit and has the sole rights to distribute Nintendo via its agents, is expanding into the growing market for electronic learning games and books with the purchase of the Question range of educational products for £2 million. Serif has acquired them from Bidewell Ltd, a subsidiary of Price Stern Stacks Inc of California.

to \$2.4bn

industry. Lexis 3 is a big
and has the fourth largest share
4 reports that worldwide net
of 1989 slipped to \$287 million
per share, compared with \$296
never, net income for the year
121 compared with \$1.3 billion

1989 included charges of \$355

of financial reserves relating to
al programmes, as well as a

4% investment in an offshore

DC Cook falls
to £40,000

DC Cook continued to find it
difficult to sell in the six
months to October, with pre-tax profits of £3.8 million
to £40,000 on turnover of
£118.4 million, up from
£108.9 million. The interest
charge more than doubled to
£3.2 million. No interim
dividend of 4p will be paid,
on earnings per share of 0.44p
compared with 9.48p
last year. The £3.1 million
were unchanged at 41p.

nar Link-up

packaging and generalist to the
with the International Group at
one of £1.2 billion. The package
jointly owned by the two will
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FAMILY MONEY

Edited by Lindsay Cook

Compensation details at last for Clowes investors

Early next week investors in Barlow Clowes should be receiving final details of the Government's £150 million compensation package. Letters, which will include a full description of the offer, are to be sent out this weekend. First payments to investors should follow next month.

Mr Nigel Hamilton of Ernst & Young, joint receiver of Barlow Clowes International and joint liquidator of Barlow Clowes Gilt Managers, said that hammering out the terms of compensation had been high on the list of priorities.

A letter is to be sent out explaining the offer, along with a full definition of the Government's terms and a copy of the accounts. Investors will be asked to return a form assigning their rights to the Government.

Most of the 18,000 investors — those who placed less than £10,000 with the two companies — will get 90 per cent of their money back. The few who invested over



Former receiver: Peter Clowes £50,000 will be paid on a sliding scale down to a minimum of 60 per cent of their investment. The payments will include rolled-up interest based on building society rates. Once assignment forms have been returned to Ernst & Young and Cork Gilt, the accountants handling the distribution, first payments will be made.

be complete by the end of February.

Action is also imminent against the intermediaries and professional advisers associated with the Barlow Clowes group during its controversial history. The Government has said it will vigorously pursue claims against third parties to help cut the cost of the £150 million payout.

Firms previously criticized for their role in the affair include Spicer & Pegg, now Spicer & Oppenheim, which dealt with the group until 1985, and Herbert Smith, the solicitors. Also criticized was Touche Ross, which replaced Spicer as auditor, and other advisers associated with the parent company, James Ferguson Holdings.

The joint receivers hope to recover as much as £65 million of the £119 million invested with Barlow Clowes International, so reducing the cost to the Government.

Jon Ashworth

Ex-gratia payment concession

Most Barlow Clowes investors can expect to be well satisfied with the Government's generous compensation package. But for people who invested through the salesmen of Allied Dunbar, an bonus may be on the cards.

Allied Dunbar has said it may allow some investors to keep ex-gratia payments made by the insurance company last year to prevent particular financial hardship through loss of invested money.

The company has paid out £100,000, which represents a

mix of lost capital and interest, which should have been earned by investments in Barlow Clowes.

Mr Peter Emms, executive director, marketing of Allied Dunbar, said the insurance company will consider each investor's case on its merits to decide whether or not to allow the investor to keep a hardship payment.

Those "merits" include how much advice was given by a D A salesman before the investor decided to place money in Barlow Clowes. "Some of

Jill Insley

the investors would have had a better claim than others if they had gone to court," said Mr Emms.

Repayments made to replace lost capital rather than interest earned from the investment, will have to be repaid to the company when the investors receive Government compensation.

"We took an assignment of rights from those investors for their right to compensation," said Mr Emms.

Jill Insley

New rules for Peps threaten to confuse, claim managers

New personal equity plan rules could confuse investors when managers are allowed to choose whether or not to give a cooling-off period, or the opportunity to cancel plans, to investors, writes Lindsay Cook.

The proposed rules from the Securities and Investments Board, scheduled to come into operation on April 6, will allow

managers to choose between the two for unit trust only and new issue plans. It is unlikely they will take a uniform approach so some unit trust only plans will not be invested immediately while others will.

Investment groups, which offer a comprehensive range of personal equity plans, are likely to continue operating a cooling-off period — investment does not take place for seven days — because otherwise they would have to produce two different sets of literature for unit trust only and share Peps. They would also have to operate stringent checks to make sure correct notices went out to investors.

Unit trust groups offering only unit trust Peps will invest immediately for plan holders but give them the option to cancel within 14 days.

The Inland Revenue had originally blocked the request from plan managers to be allowed to operate on a cancellation basis, in the same way as they do for unit trusts, because investors are only allowed to hold one plan a year. Technically a cancellation.

There will still be a problem at the end of the financial year for the new rules come into force on April 6. Investors are likely to rush into a plan for the 1989-90 financial year. They will have to allow more than seven days to make sure they meet the deadline for otherwise they will miss out altogether.

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Lindsay Cook tests opinion on the latest investment prospects

Two European trusts line up for lift-off

DENZIL MCGRANAGE



Rights: Richard Carswell

age. It now stands at 11 per cent premium.

"I can see a lot of scope in Europe although you have got to be a bit cautious after all the euphoria," said Mr Manduca.

"The tide has turned for investment trusts. In more volatile markets investors are focusing on what they are paying for."

Mr Paul Manduca, vice-chairman of Touche Remnant, would not comment on its plans for a new investment trust, although it is expected to start test marketing in the next two to three weeks. A European investment trust would be a natural for TR, which is now owned by Société Générale.

TR launched a high income investment trust at the end of 1989, which also included subscription shares in the pack-

a premium and of the other two the largest discount was 4 per cent. Lloyds Bank's Germany Smaller Companies Trust is at a 9 per cent premium, while Foreign & Colonial's Eurotrust is at a 7 per cent premium. In the Far East, the Edinburgh Fund Managers' Dragon Trust is at an 18 per cent premium.

Ms Lesley Renvoise of the Association of Investment Trust Companies, said there were an increasing number of companies trading consistently at par or above.

"In the current markets a number of rights issues must be under consideration to bring premiums down," Ms Renvoise pointed out. At 5, 6, or 7 per cent premiums are reasonable because investors are paying for expertise and for access to markets that they might not otherwise be able to enter.

"Some investors do not understand that the premium means they are paying more for the underlying shares. Savings schemes have brought a lot of relatively unsophisticated investors into the market. They provide a steady demand and have an ever-increasing effect on the discounts of smaller trusts."

The average trust is trading at a discount of 14 per cent to the underlying value of the shares. This is a fall of 10 per cent in the last two years. The association is conducting a survey to find out the number of individual shareholders that there are with investment trusts.

INSIDE

INVESTMENT

In West Germany

Euphoria evaporates as fund managers predict market correction ... p24

HOLIDAYS

Bond checked

An investment opportunity which may be costly comes under scrutiny ... p25

INSURANCE

Claims rise

Sabotage and heave return with the pouring rain ... p26

INVESTOR PROTECTION

Compensation

MPs call for independent adjudicator for compensation scheme ... p27

NEW ACCOUNTS

A year of interest

Bank customers have flocked to take advantage of interest on cheque accounts ... p28

LANDLORDS

Illicit tenancies

Tenants can be in danger when home owners rent out their property unofficially ... p29

NEWS IN BRIEF

The latest in savings offers ... p24

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*All Trust performance figures to 1.1.90, offer to offer, net income reinvested. Source: Micropal Over 5 years, Special Situations Trust +306.8% and ranks No. 2; Japan Special Situations Trust +207.5%; South East Asia Trust +150.4%.

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FAMILY MONEY

Wayne Asher sounds out investment trends in changing Europe

Experts predict roller coaster German market

SIMON TOWNSLEY

West Germany was the place to invest during the last few months of 1989. Some Far East markets did better but in West Germany there was that euphoric sense of new beginning, of being in at the birth of a superpower.

The resulting boom on the Frankfurt stock market helped European unit trusts deliver an average 43 per cent return, with the best from Fidelity, jumping by 67 per cent during the year.

But that does not mean the euphoria was justified, nor that investors should sell everything else and pile into West Germany. Even fund managers, normally brimming with optimism, are warning a correction is due.

Mrs Lynne Ridgeway, who runs Lloyds Bank's German Growth Trust - it turned £100 into £160 last year - said: "There's no denying that the long term looks very healthy. But in the short term the momentum behind the market is sentiment and not valuation."

People, it seems, have been carried away and lost sight of the fundamentals that really move markets in anything other than the short term.

West German shares look expensive compared with the income they produce while, said Mrs Ridgeway, the West German boom owed a lot to enthusiasm over the possibility of a reunified Germany becoming a superpower.

Eastern Europe, she warns, "will see some nasty surprises

as well as pleasant ones in the next few years". The more West Germany integrates with Eastern Europe, the more political turmoil will affect Western stock markets.

According to Mr Greg Allen of Crown Life's unit trust arm, "in the short term the signs are events in Eastern Europe will adversely affect inflation". He expects the West German market to be no more than 10 per cent or so up during 1990. For a British investor, the

gain would be greater if sterling continued to slide against the deutschmark. Indeed, one reason for backing West Germany in the long term is that one is buying assets denominated in hard currencies. These will increase in worth for no other reason than sterling's decline.

Financial advisers too are cautious about the euphoria surrounding Germany. Mr Mark Dampier of Bristol-based Whitechurch Securities,

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South-east Asia in sights of new trust

By Jon Ashworth

The latest in a growing band of unit trusts to take a bet on the risky markets of south-east Asia has been unveiled by Morgan Grenfell Unit Trusts.

The Asian Trader Trust - on offer for only two days a month - is aiming for high capital growth in markets such as Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore. It also favours the tiger cub economies of Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Ms Diane Seymour-Williams

is the strategic investment

thinker behind the trust.

Despite the unusually short

offer period, scheduled for

February 15 and 16, investors

will be free to subscribe for

units ahead of the launch. The

difference is that no money

will be invested until after the

offer closes.

Mr Tony Fraher, managing

director of MGUTM, said he

hopes to attract £20 million in

new investment but that any

cheques sent in before the

offer opened would not be

cashed early. There is a 2 per

cent discount during the offer

period.

The fund will only be

available through intermediaries. "This is a volatile

market," said Mr Fraher.

He added: "We are

encouraging investment from

without proper advice."

The minimum investment

is £1,000 and the initial charge

5.5 per cent.

James Capel's Tiger Fund

fund, which invests in a

similar spread of countries

but has a 3.5 per cent offer

offer in the two months since

its launch but is still in deficit

on an offer to bid basis. Mr

Colin Kniveton, managing

director of James Capel Unit

Trust Managers, said the fund

had the advantage of a broad

spread of investments.

The fund raised £10 million

at launch and has taken in

another £1 million since then.

FAMILY MONEY

Jon Ashworth reports on a life insurance version of timeshare

Charges dim returns on holiday property bond

Record levels of new business are expected this year by a scheme that combines life insurance and property and throws in a holiday on top. But anyone tempted by the direct mail advertising for the Holiday Property Bond, now falling through domestic letterboxes, should take a keen note of the charges.

The bond has attracted nearly £52 million since its launch in 1983 and is proving a popular alternative to timeshare schemes for British holidaymakers. However, the investor who does not take a holiday at one of the scheme's developments could only expect about half the return he or she would get from a building society.

Investors in the bond pay a single premium towards a whole-of-life assurance policy, underwritten by Isle of Man Assurance. Once a hefty 25 per cent front-end charge has been deducted, 60 per cent of the remainder goes into a property fund investing in a range of holiday developments. The final 40 per cent is placed in Eurobonds to provide income to cover the scheme's running costs.

The bond allows investors to take a regular holiday in one of several developments as well as sharing in any growth in the value of properties. A small element of life cover is provided on top.

Mr Colin Kniveton, who manages the bond for Isle of Man Assurance, said linking it

to a life policy made investment in property possible. "Unit trust funds alone are not allowed to invest in property. Using a single premium life policy allows us to achieve our investments and throw in some cover as an added extra," he said, adding that most of the proceeds of the initial charge went on marketing and promotion.

"We guarantee that 18.5 per cent of the initial 25 per cent charge will be spent on marketing and advertising. The logic means more income for the fund, more properties in which to invest and a wider

choice of holidays for investors," added Mr Kniveton. The charge was set at 20 per cent until January 1989 but was increased to cover the cost of extra marketing. Of the estimated £15 million invested in the Holiday Property Bond last year, as much as £3.75 million would have been taken in initial charges. Of that, £2.8 million would have been absorbed by advertising. Villa Owners Club of Newcastle, the promoter, would have taken £600,000 in commission and fees for its direct sales force; Isle of Man Assurance would

have received about £260,000 in commission, and around £100,000, or 0.75 per cent, would have made the fee to trustees.

Mr Geoffrey Baber, managing director of Villa Owners Club, said the bond was being steadily promoted in the UK. "Timeshare is the obvious competition but the bond stands alone as an investment product," he said.

The property fund invests in 16 locations worldwide, including over 400 apartments in "traditional" timeshare areas such as Tenerife, Lanzarote, Majorca and Florida. Investors are awarded points according to how much they pay in. These are added up towards an annual holiday. Investors who do not take a holiday in any year can translate their points into a cash payout, worth about 5 per cent of their investment. According to Isle of Man Assurance, only some 3 per cent of investors surrender policies each year and about a third top up policies to improve holiday options.

At least £1,000 must be invested in the bond to begin with, the minimum for top-ups being £250. The latest mailed advertisement indicated that a newspaper city editor has invested but Isle of Man Assurance would not reveal who he was.

Trustees of the bond are Singer and Friedlander, the merchant bank, and manager of Eurobond investments.

L & G to cover share index falls

Recent sharp falls in world stock markets have encouraged Legal & General to launch a unit trust package with a built-in safety net for the cautious investor.

The scheme uses an insurance policy to protect against decreases in the value of the FT-SE 100 share index. It is geared to lump sum investments in the group's UK Recovery Trust or its Equity

Income Trust. The insurance will kick in if the index drops over a period chosen by the client - either three, four or five years. Cost of the cover is 5 per cent of the investment.

Mrs Michelle Barber, director of Unit Funds, said the scheme was thought to be the first of its kind to offer 100 per cent protection against a drop in the FT-SE 100. "The simple message is it will

provide peace of mind to investors who like the potential of equities but are worried about sharp falls. Through the scheme they know they will be covered."

How much protection they can expect will depend on the number of units held and the size of any decrease in the index. If the funds outperforms the index, investors could receive more than they have £2,500.

Investors can apply for the cover now but it will only take effect from March 9. Apart from the 5 per cent premium, normal unit trust charges will apply. The up-front charge is 6 per cent, and the annual management fee 1.5 per cent.

It's an investment style which has produced outstanding performance results - year after year.

Remember past performance is no guarantee of future returns and that the value of units reflects the value of the underlying investments and may fluctuate and is not guaranteed.

*Source: Based on Planned Savings Data Service Group Weighted Performance Returns of 40 different unit trust groups (11.1M-11.9G). Other 6 offers.

Fidelity ranks No. 1 over 3 years and No. 2 over 1 year.

*Offer to bid 4.11% to 1.1%.

Fidelity Investment Services Ltd. Member of IMRO and LAUTRO.

Member of the LTD.

The fund raised £10 million at launch and has taken in another £1 million since then.

It is a unit trust with a

5.5 per cent initial charge.

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FAMILY MONEY

That sinking feeling in the shade of a tree

Rodney Hobson notes
how subsidence claims rise as the rainfall average decreases

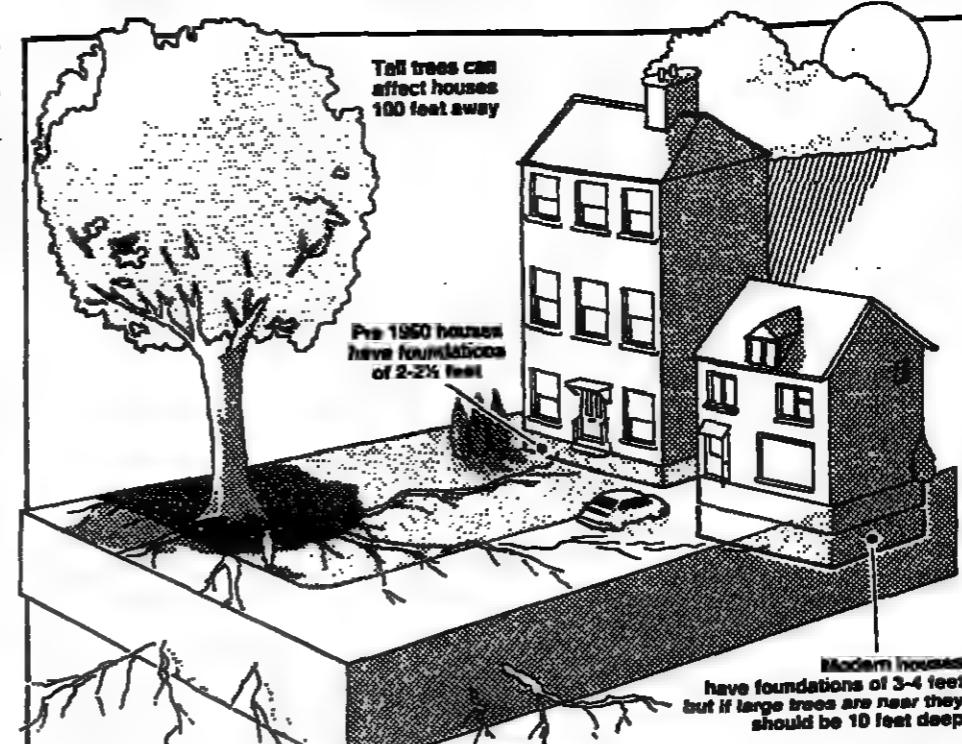
Subsidence and heave, the twin terrors of home owners are back. The drying up of soil, followed by saturation when rain does come, has produced a rise in insurance claims.

Mr Mike Auld of the *Guardian Royal Exchange* puts the figures in perspective. Subsidence claims normally come into GRE at the rate of 80 to 90 a month. In September to November the figure leapt to 100. And December saw 150 claims. Not all cracks proved to be subsidence but the majority certainly will be.

Royal Insurance admitted when announcing 1989 third quarter figures that it had subsidence claims totalling £24 million. GRE puts its figure at several millions of pounds. Stockbrokers' analysts specializing in insurance expect Sun Alliance to have fared worst when final figures for 1989 are announced.

Subsidence has arisen from an abnormal rainfall pattern, with only June and October having the usual amount of rainfall in the seven months from May to November. May was driest, with 16.3mm in England and Wales, only 29 per cent of the average figure for the month.

September had half its normal rainfall and July, August and November less than two-



thirds. The dry spell was sandwiched between downpours in April and December, when 160 per cent of normal rain was recorded.

High on the risk list are houses built on shrinkable clay. Heavily populated London and the South-east are vulnerable. So too is the Bournemouth area, where Mr Alan Harris, a consulting engineer, says the normal 25 to 30 outstanding cases has soared to 300. Gwent is another at-risk zone.

Subsidence is the most com-

mon large claim that any householder is likely to face. The bill for remedial work is unlikely to be less than £6,000 and Mr Harris has handled one case of £95,000. In extreme cases it may be cheaper to rebuild than to underpin.

Insurance companies had hoped the last severe dry spell in 1976 would have shaken out most of the trouble. Older houses subject to subsidence were treated, the argument went, and newer houses were built on sounder foundations.

Mr Harris confirms modern

foundations go down three to four feet against two feet or two foot six inches pre-1960. However, he says knowledge of what causes subsidence is growing and new factors come into consideration.

Tall trees in tight suburban

housing plots are sucking moisture out of the ground, with roots spreading under houses. "As a rough guide, if a tree is half its height away from a building on clay then it is likely to be having a significant effect on the foundations," Mr Harris says.

Lindsay Cook deciphers the alphabet of tax coding

Keeping up with the letter of the tax law

Nearly 7 million notices of coding were sent out by the Inland Revenue this week and a further batch will be despatched in the week beginning February 12.

The higher the tax code, the more allowances you have, and the less tax you pay. In addition to the basic allowances there are additional smaller ones such as the blind person's allowance.

Accountants estimate that about 1 per cent of the notices are usually wrong resulting in up to 60,000 people paying too much or too little tax in the following year.

But this year with many couples having their codes changed because of independent taxation and an extra million codes being issued more could be incorrect.

If you have not notified the Inland Revenue of changes in your circumstances such as getting married or failed to fill in the tax return sent out last April then you may be issued with a lower code than you should have or receive no notice at all.

The code, which is also sent to your employer, is expressed as three figures and a letter. The figure is an abbreviation of how much your personal allowances add up to. In the case of a single person with no additional allowances the code would be 278, indicating that the person can earn £2,785 before he or she has to

pay tax. A married man with no further allowances would have the code 437 and the married man's allowance of £2,375.

The higher the tax code, the more allowances you have, and the less tax you will pay.

These give the total amount that can be earned in the next tax year starting on April 6 before tax has to be paid.

Accountants estimate that about 1 per cent of the notices are usually wrong resulting in up to 60,000 people paying too much or too little tax in the following year.

At £540 this is worth more than £2 a week to those who are registered blind. For many jobs there are flat rate allow-

ances agreed between the appropriate trade union and the Inland Revenue.

These cover the cost of replacing or maintaining tools and buying special clothing for work. Typically they work out at £40 to £60 a year and should be included in your allowances.

The letter stands for your tax category. Single people or married women have the letter L. Married men and women receiving the married couple's allowance because their husbands do not earn

enough to use it should have the letter H. Single parents receiving the additional personal allowance also have the letter H. Married men over 65 should have the letter V and single people and married women over 65 the letter P.

People with other taxable income such as widows, divorcees, people with pensions from previous employers or the state will have the code F.

Those with a second job who have no tax allowances left to set against the income should have the letters BR indicating that tax will be deducted at the basic rate.

The letters OT also indicate that no allowances have been given but higher rate tax may be deducted depending on income. A few lucky people have the letters NT, which means no tax is deducted whatever the pay.

If you think your code is wrong you should contact your local tax office and the mistake may be amended before April. Otherwise your employer will deduct the wrong amount of tax from your pay.

A guide should be included with the notice of coding and further information in the leaflet IR 34 on Income Tax and Pay As You Earn, which is available from tax offices.

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ling tree

SIB scheme faces 'conflict' critics

In other words, a tree that is 30 feet tall would affect any building up to 15 feet away. Foundations of houses near trees may need to go down as much as 10 feet. Householders in areas vulnerable to subsidence should be entitled to a refund on the cost of rebuilding the house. Increasing the value of insurance in line with inflation may be insufficient. If the sum insured is, say, three-quarters of the cost of flats, then the insurance companies will pay only three-quarters of the claim.

Insurance companies have to work out building costs based on the total floor area of every room and the type and age of the building. Where advice is given by the insurance company and it is well worth getting the insurer to explain the policy in detail - it is best to obtain that advice in writing to avoid a dispute later.

Even where a homeowner is fully insured, he or she is likely to be out of pocket, at least temporarily. The insurer normally has to meet the first £500 of a subsidence claim. And contractors will present a monthly account as work progresses, while insurance companies prefer a total bill when they are satisfied that everything has been put right.

However, Mr Auld insists: "There is no question of insurance companies dragging their feet. It takes time to assess the situation and take remedial action. It is in the insurer's company's interest to pay claims quickly."

habet of tax coding

with the tax law

with firms still operating under "interim" authorisation from the Securities and Investments Board, as these are specifically excluded from the compensation arrangements which cover up to £50,000 of a £50,000 investment.

The main complaint about a conflict of interest came from George Foulkes, MP for



Questions in the House: Marjorie Mowlam, MP for Redcar, Cumnock and Doon Valley, Strathclyde, who last week met the administrators of the scheme, Mr Eddie Ray, the chairman, and Miss Myra Kinghorn, the company secretary, to discuss payments of about £55,000 to three more of the 92 investors in Greenan Investment Management of Ayr, Strathclyde.

Greenan failed in April 1989 and the latest payment brought total compensation paid to investors to £457,000.

"The problem with Greenan was that lots of people were claiming, but the books were a work of fiction," said Mr Ray, contrasting this situation with the earlier collapse of Allied Equity.

Thanks to a "perfect" set of books at that company, investors were paid out within 18 weeks of the failure.

However, Mr Ray estimated that investors would have faced a delay of a further 18 months if they had been forced to wait for a liquidator to sort out the firm rather than being paid under the scheme.

Mr Foulkes said that on the whole the payments were satis-

factory. Scottish law has actually made 17 of them better off than they would have been in the rest of Britain.

Because Scots lawyers advised the scheme that 17 investors had an "enforceable gratuitous claim" on Greenan, they were paid back their original investments in full - a total of £75,000 - instead of the current market value of which would have been less.

However, the lawyers turned down 25 other similar claims on the grounds that there was no evidence of an enforceable obligation, though the investors had been given mis-statements of the true value of their investments, sometimes backed up by inflated receipts.

These 25 investors are to be paid either the amount the investment fetched when sold or its value at the date of Greenan's failure - whichever was more.

"I think they might have considered *ex gratia* payments," said Mr Foulkes, "but they said obviously they had

got to consider the interests of the members as well as paying the right people the right amounts," she said.

Although he considered the outcome for Greenan investors reasonably satisfactory, Mr Foulkes said he was constantly aware of a threat of conflict of interest, since the people deciding on the payments were the same as those responsible for providing the money.

Miss Kinghorn said she felt

that Mr Foulkes' view was due to a misinterpretation:

"It is not a conflict, it is a balance," she said, explaining that the scheme's rules did not allow *ex gratia* payments:

"It is not discretionary, people get paid the amount they are owed - the current value of their investment. We have to make sure we are



Next on the list: JGM Financial Services, of Macclesfield, Greater Manchester, the trading name was authorized for," she explained.

The scheme will be writing to JGM investors shortly asking for details of their claims, and Mr Ray estimates that

as well as counselling investors to keep documentary proof of any investment dealings, Mr Ray strongly advised against any trade with "interim" authorized firms.

Nearly two years after applying to the self-regulatory bodies they needed to join to stay in business, these firms have not yet managed to prove their suitability for membership and so are not covered by the compensation scheme.

JGM issues a full list of interim authorized firms each month and will check individual names by telephone on 01-929 3652.

"I can't see any reason to trade with interim authorized firms," said Mr Ray.

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Staying safe if gifts go to school

The presents that delighted at Christmas now face the perils of life at school or university.

If they are lost or damaged, parents, and the lucky recipients of the gifts, may find that the possessions were not covered by insurance.

Some household policies do not extend to items stored in dormitories, but there are specialist policies to cover costly games kit or musical instruments.

The Holmewood Student Personal Effects Insurance, underwritten by Lloyd's, will, for £2.75 a term, cover the property - including on journeys to and from school. It gives cover up to £500, with a one-off limit of £150. Claims below £10 are excluded, but the policy covers bicycles and will include school trips abroad, of up to 30 days.

The higher £5 per term premium gives £1,000 cover. This has a single item limit of £250, with a £500 limit for musical instruments.

The policies are written through schools participating

in the scheme operated by Holmewood, a subsidiary of Brown Shrigley.

Parents should watch for exclusion clauses on all such insurance. Usually, policies exclude motor cycles, cash and contact lenses, as well as breakage of sports equipment. Check whether a child has to have a locker with an effective lock for insurance cover.

Those in halls of residence should find out if whether they are covered if a thief could gain easy access to the room.

Harrison Beaumont, the broker, of Witney, Oxfordshire, offers personal property insurance for those aged 16 and above through with Norwich Union. The lowest premium is £2.60 a year for £2,000 cover for personal belongings and up to £1,000 landlord's fixtures and fittings. There is a £300 single article limit.

There are three zones for cover in halls of residence under this policy. Up to £65 is charged for Liverpool, London and Manchester, £44 for Glasgow, Leeds and Newcastle and £33 elsewhere.

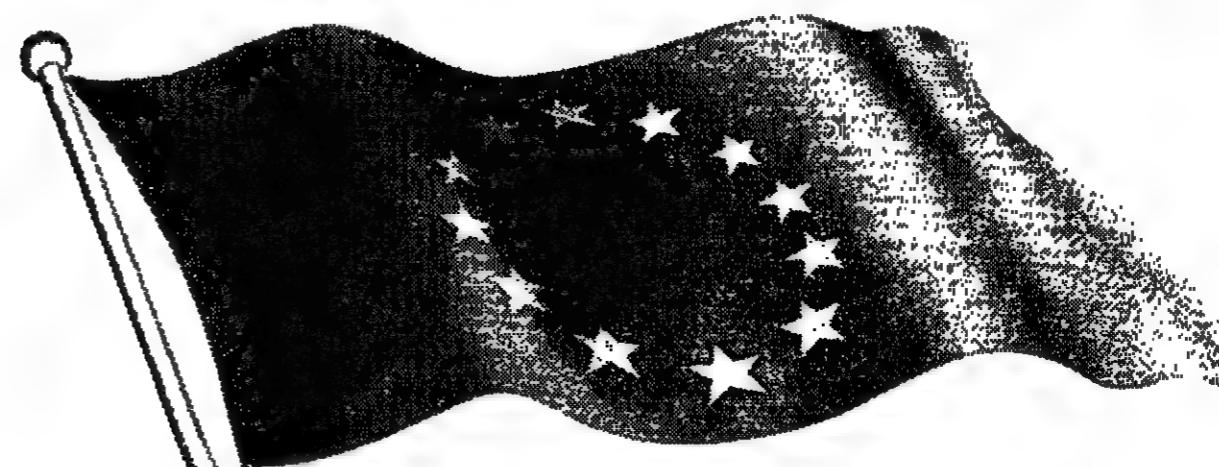
Musical instruments can often turn out to be particularly difficult to insure. Norwich Union, through Harrison Beaumont, will cover a violin worth up to £1,500 for £15 a year in a flat or a hall.

The main alternative is to insure a student's property in normal house contents insurance, usually under "all risks". Most insurers will understand this if a letter giving the term address is sent.

Conal Gregory

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THE INVESTMENT HOUSE

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Banks to clamp down on identity

By Jon Ashworth
Banks and building societies are demanding more proof of identity from their customers in an attempt to clamp down on money laundering and other illegal activities. This has annoyed customers who have grown used to a more relaxed approach.

The tougher stand follows a request from the Building Societies' Commission for more stringent checks on tenants. There was concern over the ease with which accounts could be opened to negotiate stolen cheques using false names and addresses.

There were also fears about the ease with which banks and building societies could be used for the transfer and deposit of money linked to criminal activities such as drug trafficking.

Last July, the Commission wrote: "In the past, many societies have not thought it necessary to check on the backgrounds of those opening and operating 'pass book' bank accounts, in contrast to the practice of banks in respect of those operating current accounts. This is because the pass book system is not open to the same abuse as a cheque book-operated account."

It said tighter measures were necessary because of the growing use of building society accounts for "laundering" cheques. There was also evidence that criminals were using accounts as a relatively anonymous home for large sums of money.

FAMILY MONEY

Melinda Wittstock with a cautionary tale for city dwellers

Being left flat is an illegal tenant's worst nightmare

Trying to find decent rented accommodation in London is a nightmare for most flat-hunters. Even worse, it appears that even with a proper lease, a tenant may be flung on the street if the landlord fails behind on the mortgage.

With mortgage interest rates having risen from about 9.8 per cent to 14.5 per cent in a year, many homeowners, particularly first-time buyers, struggling to meet monthly mortgage repayments, have been forced by financial worries to rent out all or parts of their homes.

But the great majority of homeowners violate their mortgage agreements by remitting their property without telling the lender. Mortgage lenders have no legal obligation to give "illegal tenants" any warning before unmercifully kicking them out onto the street, though most banks and building societies say they would try to take a sympathetic attitude.

One tenant discovered quite by accident one year into her lease that a building society was threatening to repossess her flat. She had mistakenly opened a letter to her landlord indicating that he had fallen into arrears by more than £10,000.

"I had been paying £500 a month for a year but he hadn't used any of it to pay the mortgage," she said. "I rang the Citizens Advice Bureau, who told me I had no rights



"I think you have shown a most sympathetic attitude, young man," because I was effectively an illegal tenant. They said I could be asked to leave within days of the building society proceeding with repossession.

The landlord finally negotiated an arrangement with his building society allowing the tenant to pay her rent directly to the building society to go towards his mortgage repayments and arrears.

But the tenant's worries did not stop there. "A number of lending outfits soon started banging on the front door at 8 am on weekends, but eventually they gave up and went away," she said.

"Then a letter from the local

authority arrived threatening to repossess the furniture if a £1,000 bill was not paid within days. Luckily, the landlord's grandfather ended up paying the bill."

Though tenants do not have any rights as assured tenants if a mortgage-paying landlord has not obtained permission to have tenants from the mortgage lender, it is often impossible for a tenant to find out if a landlord has a mortgage or not, let alone whether he or she is actually paying it.

Given the scarcity of good rented accommodation, most would-be tenants are themselves put on audition by the landlord; any questions about

the landlord's financial solvency are hardly welcomed. Offending the owner of a much-needed flat does not often seem worth the risk.

"I don't deny that it is quite a difficult situation. A tenant really has to get confirmation that the mortgage lender has approved a tenancy, but he or she can only really rely on a homeowner's word," he said.

Building Society Association figures show that the number of homeowners having fallen into arrears rose by 20 per cent to 45,100 in the first half of 1989, compared with the second half of 1988.

Though the RSA does not yet have figures for the second half of 1989, it believes the trend is worsening. The Labour Party estimated last September that 380,000 homeowners were behind in their mortgage payments.

Tenants are only protected under the Act if their landlords secure permission from the lender or take out mortgages *after* the tenant has signed a lease. If there are any problems, the tenant becomes the tenant of the building society or lender.

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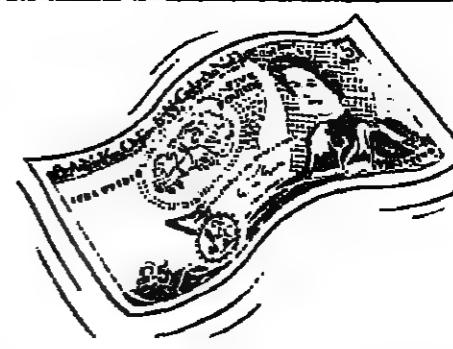
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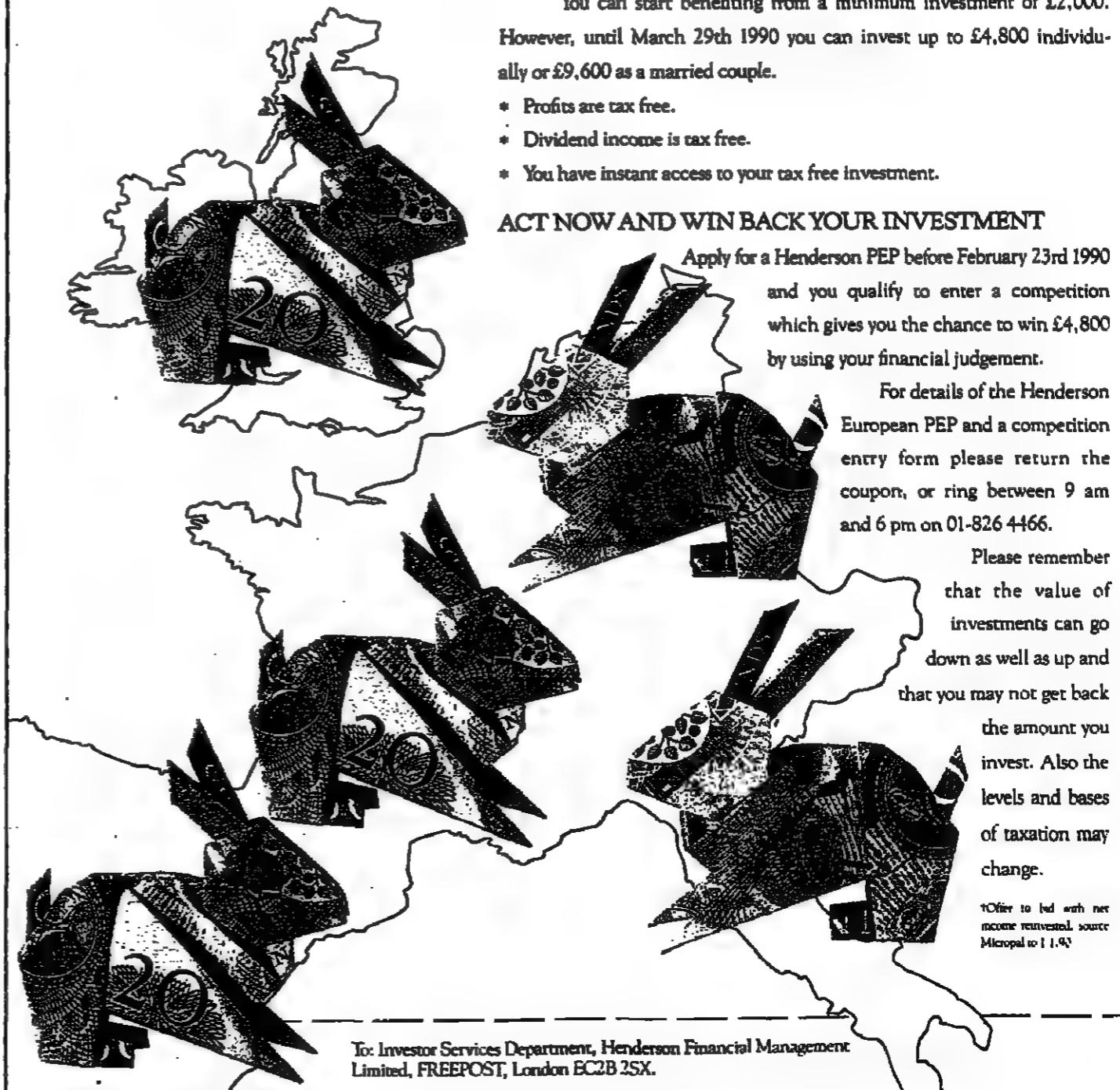
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THE INVESTMENT MANAGERS

How to stand out in a house buyer's market

1990 is the year to buy a house, if the latest rash of predictions is to be believed. This may be good news for buyers, but is small comfort for sellers who must now try even harder to close a sale.

As it is, many vendors have become resigned to accepting offers well below what they originally had in mind or forgoing a sale.

Apart from heeding your agent's advice on the asking price, what can you do to speed the selling process?

"Because the supply is dramatically greater than demand and purchasers are overwhelmed with properties, the 'whole trick at the moment is to stand out from the rest," says Mr Trevor Kent, president of the National Association of Estate Agents.

He suggests insisting that

sale details feature a colour

photograph, even if this costs

you up to £100 extra.

It is, he said, a persuasive device that many agents are nonetheless cutting out to save costs.

Second, don't balk at displaying a "For Sale" board, especially if in a road of similar houses. It will be a signpost for the prospective purchasers.

Finally, do the "kerb appeal" check. "Stand outside, look at the house as though you're a buyer," Mr Kent says. "Does it look as if it's in top condition? Is the garden tidy? Is the drive clogged with cars and a caravan? If it is, arrange to keep them round the corner. And don't let your son service his motorbike on the doorstep."

"Why? Because, presented

with details of up to 50 properties at a time, buyers can do no more than drive round, glancing at exterior. It is vital to make the right impression at that point; the more viewers you have, the more likelihood of a sale."

Similar advice comes from Prudential Property Services in its 10-point plan designed to help vendors give their houses "homebuyer appeal."

This makes it clear that the old "take-it-or-leave-it" approach - mismatched beds, half-decorated rooms, dogs on sofas - can be as off-putting as pressure-selling.

The PPS plan divides

- It is wise to show the best parts of your property at last as well as at first

as at first

broadly into two sections - interior and exterior. It suggests that, outside, you should service the garden gate, trim the lawn, weed the flowerbeds, paint the front door, check that the doorknob is working, and attend to rotting window-frames and gutters.

These spell neglect to many buyers, and the possibility of a big repair bill. Inside, ensure that it's all clean and tidy, but not clinical - windows, kitchen and bathroom should sparkle," the PPS says. "Have a blitz on loose handles and dripping taps.

"Redecoration is rarely necessary, but the odd lick of

paint can make first impressions so much more favourable. Also, good lighting makes the difference between a dingy, uninviting home and a bright, welcoming one."

Atmosphere is seen as a potent lure. "People often fall for houses because they sense they could live there, but remember to appeal to all their senses," the PPS advises.

Can soft lights, sweet music,

fresh flowers, and the aroma of fresh coffee ...

Be helpful, too. Provide information on fuel bills, give viewers a chance to walk round on their own, tell them you are willing to include carpets and curtains in the price - but don't force them ("One man's style is another's bad taste").

Show the best parts of your property last as well as first," the PPS says. "Try to leave all potential buyers with a good impression".

Having got the product right, leave salesmanship to the agent - it is what you are paying for; that, and his judgement on price. If too low, the result will be a stampede of gawping buyers - and if too high, none at all.

Always get a second or third opinion at the outset. Also consider the merits of a joint agency in reaching more prospective buyers (albeit at greater cost), or of offering a sole agent the incentive of some 1/4 per cent commission in advance on an agreed sale price, plus £100 for every £1,000 on top.

"Redecoration is rarely necessary, but the odd lick of

paint can make first impressions so much more favourable. Also, good lighting makes the difference between a dingy, uninviting home and a bright, welcoming one."

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We'd rather not talk about 1983, nor would we wish to talk about any other year in isolation, even those in which we came first.

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*Planned Savings Survey - July 1989.



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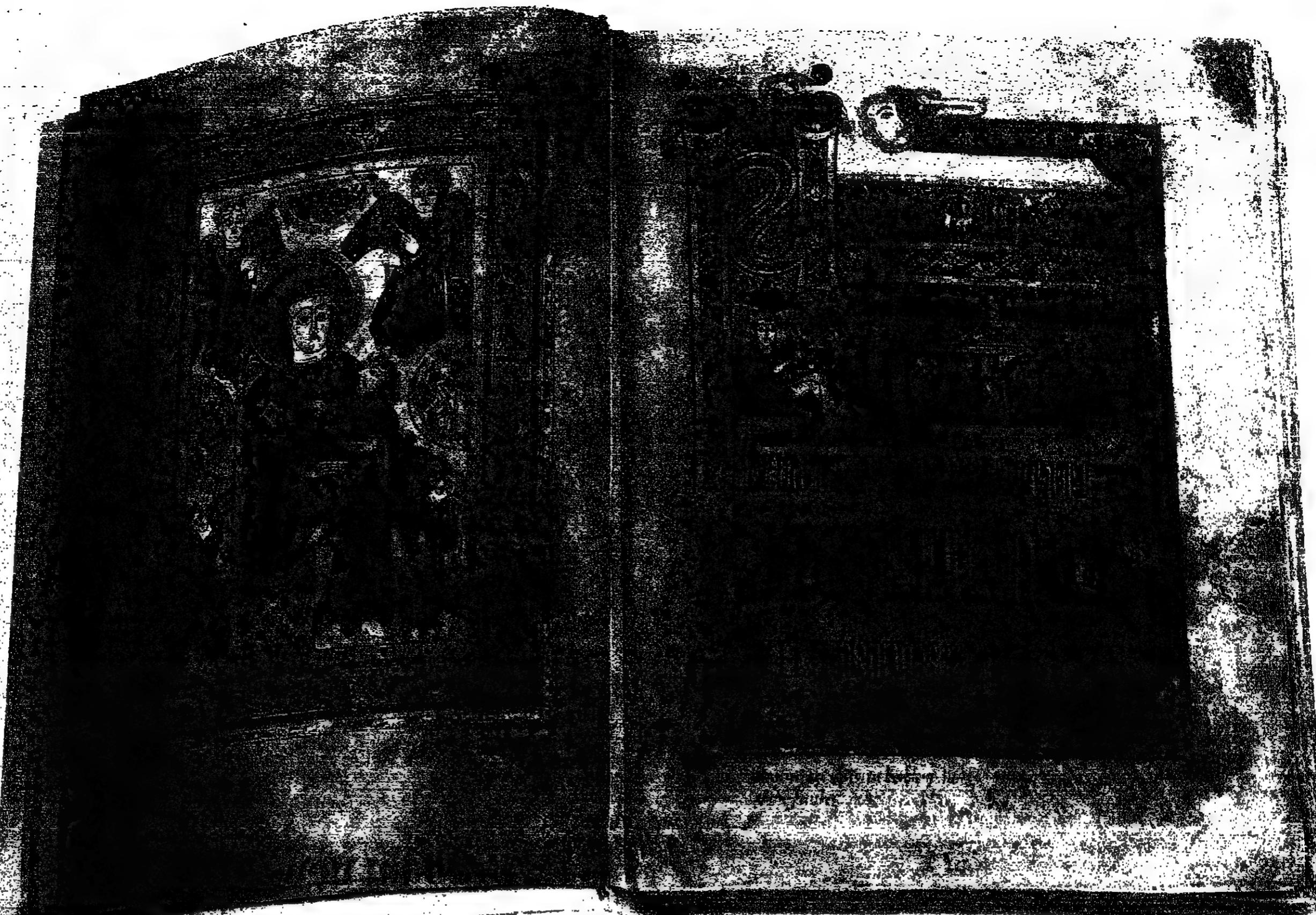


- BOOKS: WILLIAM TREVOR STORIES
- DRINK: MALT WHISKY
- EATING OUT: THE LONDON SUBURBS
- COOK: MAKING MARMALADE

REVIEW

SATURDAY JANUARY 20 1990

IN THE BEGINNING...



Written scriptures were held in great reverence in medieval Ireland. Books of special sanctity were believed to bring good luck if cut into strips and worn in amulets. Scraps from their pages were swallowed as medicine. Water poured over them was thought to have healing properties. The holy manuscripts that the Viking raiders did not make bonfires of were at risk of being snipped and soaked into waste paper by the devout.

Small wonder, then, that so few written texts have survived from the days before the invention of printing, when literacy was a closed book to the majority, and every book was unique and mysterious, the fruit of endless hours of arcane labour. In later periods, church manuscripts were sometimes in danger of attack from hostile sects, and of damage through neglect. The wonder is that any survived at all.

Today, manuscripts such as the *Book of Kells*, the most extraordinary of all these survivors, are the greatest treasures of the libraries that possess them. They are cherished and protected with all the resources science can provide. But they are still unique, and therefore still as vulnerable as ever. Even today, the risk of destruction by fire or flood is not just theoretical, as the burning of Romania's National Library showed only last month. Illuminated manuscripts are so fragile that even the librarians who look after them hesitate to turn their pages too often, for fear of aggravating the wear and tear of centuries.

So it is good news that a full facsimile edition has been made of the *Book of Kells*, which is generally acknowledged to be the supreme achievement of the art of the decorated book. Created by monks of the Irish Church (though probably not in Ireland), in about the year 800, when most of Europe was deep in the turmoil of the Dark Ages, it is a text of the four Gospels, richly illuminated, on almost every page. At various times in its history it has been stolen, mutilated, buried, neglected, lost and recovered.

The facsimile is an ultimate safeguard to knowledge of the book, and a significant advance in accessibility. It is closer to the original than the best editions available until now. Only one high-quality modern edition exists in colour, and it fully reproduces only 93 of the book's 680 pages.

The new complete edition is a collectors' item restricted to 1,480 leather-bound copies, priced at £3,950 each—a price which is not



OLY MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS
THAT SURVIVED THE RAVAGES
OF HISTORY ARE RARE AND
PRECIOUS. NOW
THE GREATEST
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going to bring the mastery of the scribes to every station bookstall. But it is the nearest thing to the original that print and electronics can contrive. After a thousand years, the *Book of Kells* is going into publication at last.

The project is the outcome of 10 years of planning by Urs Diggelin, a Swiss publisher who specializes in fine art editions. "I have encountered many obstacles in those years, but they did not stop me from pursuing my dream."

He found that Trinity College, Dublin, where the book had been kept for 300 years, was not easily

won over to sanction the project. "It is probably the best protected manuscript I have ever come across," he says. "You can imagine the excitement and emotion I felt when, after years of negotiations, I was allowed to see the whole manuscript page by page."

Even being allowed to look through the book was an unusual privilege. "The safety of the manuscript was to us of overriding importance, and we thought long and hard before agreeing even to begin discussions," says Peter Fox, librarian of Trinity College.

The college insisted that the book

would have to remain in the library at all times, under controlled conditions of light, temperature and humidity. Only the library staff would be allowed to handle it during the long task of photographing each page.

For a time, it seemed that the whole project might founder over the problem of photography. The common method of taking the manuscript apart to hold the pages flat for the camera, and then rebinding it afterwards, was out of the question. The brittle pigments of the illuminations could easily be chipped away from the ancient vellum pages, which ruled out the alternative of laying sheets of glass over the page to flatten them.

"When the book was examined under magnification, it was quite frightening how cracked the pigments had become," Fox says. After much research, Diggelin and his team devised a system which held each page open with small suction-points.

Nearly 500 buyers have already ordered copies of the facsimile. A third are libraries, universities and similar institutions. A similar number are previous customers of the publishers, mostly from German-speaking areas, where facsimile collecting is more widespread than it is here. The other orders have come from private collectors, investors and specialists. In Ireland, no fewer than 50 private buyers have ordered copies, despite the price.

In Dublin the manuscripts are now bound separately, and two are kept on display at any one time, with the other two in the strongroom. The pages are turned about once a month. Even the library's staff in charge of ancient manuscripts normally avoid handling the book more than they can help, so as not to subject it to undue wear.

The book has always been a secret treasure. It was never designed to be pored over, even by dedicated scholars. In fact, the experience of browsing through it in reproduction is a strange and almost hypnotic one. The fantastic intricacy of the illuminations is obsessive. Influences from Coptic scribes in the Egyptian desert and the icon-painters of Byzantium, transmitted along mysterious lines of contact to the edge of the civilized world, are challenged and almost overwhelmed by an ancient Celtic passion for mazes and abstractions.

Figures of saints and angels are frozen in hieratic poses which seem designed to separate them as fully as possible from the everyday world. Men and animals are pulled

wildly out of shape and knitted together like macramé work, as if to deny the sordid limitations of flesh and blood. Tiny acrobats bend into mad contortions to form capital letters. A candy-striped cat bounds across the sacred pages in pursuit of a mouse straight out of *Tom and Jerry*, which has apparently run off with

a Communion wafer. The snakes that Saint Patrick banished from Ireland seem to have wriggled into the margins to hide from him.

Like *Tom and Jerry*, these miniatures strenuously avoid being naturalistic. Many of them probably had symbolic meanings now forgotten (the snake, for instance, often symbolized resur-

rection, because of the way it sheds its old skin to put on a new one). In other medieval books scribes often took advantage of these double meanings to smuggle into their manuscripts wonderfully close observation of nature and of everyday life. The Kells scribes preferred to work a sort of Disney-Continued overleaf

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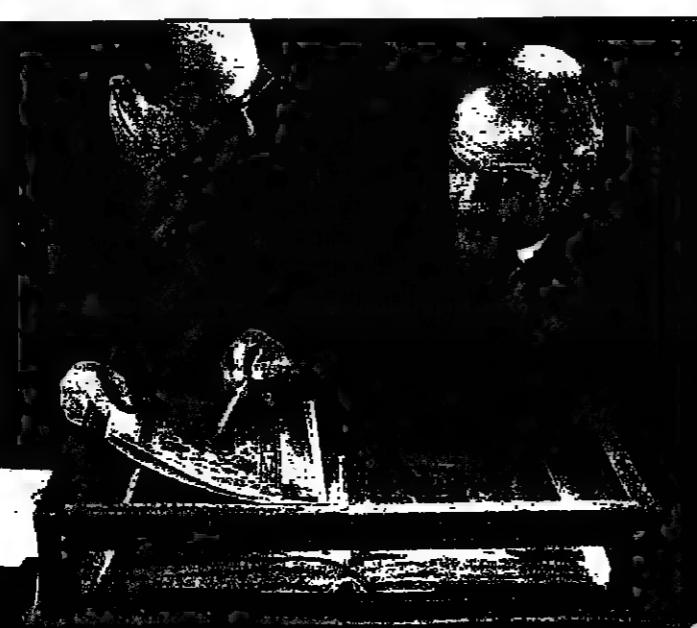
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Passed for press: Librarian Peter Fox (left) and publisher Urs Diggelin closely check the final test print for radiance of colour reproduction

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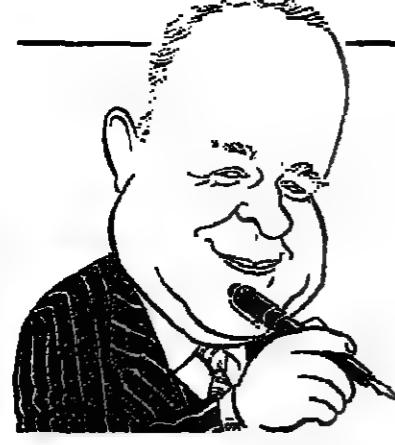
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THE NED SHERRIN COLUMN



Pig's ear of a breakfast

You leave the Pennsylvania Station/ At a quarter past 10/ You read a magazine/ And you're in Trenton again...

And from Trenton, New Jersey, I went to Bucks County, Pa.

After spending 13 happy hours in Qantas comfort crossing the Pacific, I passed the next three standing behind 2,000 Japanese in the immigration queue at LA airport. On American Airlines my seat for the ensuing five hours was next to Ben (11 months), who does not like to fly and does not hesitate to let you know.

By the time I got to New York I felt I deserved a rest, and there is no more tranquil spot than Holicong Road, Lahaska, where two of my longest-standing friends in America, Bob Russell and Bill Mandel, have a 17th-century farmhouse. Building began soon after 1673, when the Quaker William Penn was given his royal grant to Pennsylvania. In the grounds are a vast barn, now converted into an artist's studio, a milkhouse in which a greenhouse has been added for cultivating orchids and a corn crib redesigned as guest quarters. It is my habit when people are kind enough to let me stay with them to present them with a brass plaque for the guest-room, saying Grace Poole Suite, or in this case Annex, after the lady in the west wing who gave Mr Rochester such a hard time in *Jane Eyre*. I occupied the Grace Poole Annex for the weekend, nipping through the scattering of snow to the main house for meals. It owes the air of peace to its owners' shrewd move in buying up the 50 acres of farmland which surround it.

Holicong is American Indian for an underground stream which surfaces down from the house in two small lakes. Outside the dining-room window are bird tables. We shared meals with a colourful parade of chickadees, bluebirds and bright red cardinals. Any crumbs they knocked overboard were grabbed by a family of grey squirrels who gambolled about the branches of the trees in quaint Disney fashion.

A Pennsylvania delicacy is "scrapple", a savoury breakfast



minces made of little bits of otherwise inedible pig, like ears. It is extremely cheap and my hosts' predecessor in Holicong Road was once shocked when a rich Miss Biddle of Philadelphia served him scrapple for luncheon. There used to be a radio jingle which went: "Listen all you friends of mine/ Philadelphia scrapple's fine/ And it only costs a dime." We ate it with a mushroom omelette. For those of you who continue to be curious about what we drank, we had a St Emilion, Canon La Gaffeliere '78 with the lamb on Saturday and a St Julien, Chateau Talbot '78 with the veal on Sunday.

There is also a ghost. I didn't see him myself but Bill Mandel and George, his Boston terrier, have seen him often. He is a vague, benign presence — they think a Lenape Indian whose territory this was.

Wickedly my hosts had told Gerda, who cleans for them, that

their weekend visitor was an after-dinner speaker from England who charges £5,000 per address. (This is not quite true.) Gerda thought about it long and hard and said: "Surely he's not going to charge you £5,000 if he's staying in the house."

IT IS nearly two years since I visited New York, and much has changed. There is a new public holiday, Martin Luther King Day. Bloomington has gone bankrupt, but is still open. Keith McNally, the British boy wonder caterer, has opened yet another ragingly fashionable restaurant, Lucky Strike. For gangs of kids, "wilding", or bag-snatching, is in — my guest, for the theatre, Marti Stevens, just escaped the other night. She now carries a paper bag with the minimum inside. You can no longer buy *The Times* at the Algonquin but on 57th Street the Parker Meridien strives to remind its clientele that it

is part of a French chain. The other day a hellboy wished a departing guest, "Have a nice jour."

Most incredible there is the activity on Broadway. Rex Harrison, Stewart Granger and Glynn Johns are playing in *The Circle*, and across town in the satirical revue *Forbidden Broadway* Rex and Glynn are sent up in a parody of that song from *Gigi*.

Rex: We met at nine.
Glynn: We met at eight.
Rex: I was on time.
Glynn: No, you were late.
Bott: Ah yes, we remember our lines.

Jerome Robbins' Broadway is an inspiring anthology of all his best bits of staging. The suite of dances from *West Side Story* is as fresh as the recent revivals of the whole work have been stale. The entire cast should come to London as soon as possible in exchange for one of our classical troupes only leaving

behind the narrator and the clumsy script he has been given. If narrated it must be, Derek Griffiths would be the perfect choice. Tommy Tune's direction of *Grand Hotel* is as artful as was his work for *Nine*, but now it emphasizes the frailties of the show rather than concealing them. There is no interval. Escape was impossible.

Larry Gelbart's book for *City of Angels* is the funniest and most classically inventive since *Forum*, which he wrote with Burt Shevelove. The play is a hit but it's sad that English soft rock-inspired musicals have so lulled American audiences that they are reluctant to lean forward and listen to 359 beautifully crafted laughs. The evocative pastiche jazz score, an interesting idea, does not quite play theatrically; but Florence Klotz's witty clothes, Robin Wagner's seedy Hollywood sets and Michael Blakemore's confident direction certainly do. *Annie Two Miss Hannigan's Revenge* has bitten the dust in Washington; but my host, Glen Roven (proprietor of the New York Grace Poole Suite), is workshopping his musical examination of the emotional pulse of America, and *Heart's Desire*. It is daring, tuneful and adult; but his director did not feel that the cast was ready for a jaundiced foreign eye, so I shall have to come back later. Roven is a wit, a gossip and a diminutive eccentric. He has a little which is purple with a yellow lid, a green handle and a red whistle. When it boils it plays "a screaming thimble between C and E and makes me think the Nazis are coming down Broadway to get me".

Arthur Luehrs is working on a musical of *The Thin Man*. Hal Prince is directing a new *Kander and Ebb "Tuney"*, as *Variety* would say, based on *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, and Stephen Sondheim has two shows on the go. The only better news would be that he was preparing three.

SOME THINGS don't change — like Polish jokes. A Pole in a bar is watching television. He bets the bartender \$50 the man on the ledge on the eight o'clock news will not jump to his death. The bartender takes the bet and the man jumps. The bartender is ashamed to grab the Pole's money. "I saw him jump already on the six o'clock news," he confesses. "So did I," says the Pole. "I didn't think he'd do it again."

A New York friend, Tony Geiss, had a wry reflection on the Berlin situation. What do you say first if you are East German — "I was never a Nazi" or "I was never a Communist"?

PS. Q. How many feminists does it take to change a light bulb? A: That's not funny!

FRANCES EDMONDS

If I were...

If I were Shirley Porter, Tesco heiress and controversial Tory leader of Westminster City Council, I would still be recovering from the humiliation of my televised apology this week. All right, I would belatedly concede, so the sale of three cemeteries in 1987 was hardly one of my more felicitous moves. But today, I would suggest, let us bury the past, perhaps in some privately-owned resting place recently purchased for £500 and now worth £5 million. Instead, I would exhort, let us "crack on" with the Herculean task of cleaning up the nation's capital.

Immediately I would contact Judge James Pickles in his holiday hideaway and suggest he take early retirement from the pressures of the judiciary. Such talents as his, I would argue, are ill-appreciated by the wishy-washy bleeding hearts who create public opinion nowadays. Next I would persuade the good judge to accept the new position of Westminster's Chief Law Administrator. Together we would then start fixing more appropriate penalties for the anti-social behaviour of some of our fellow city dwellers.

First of all, throughout the entire borough of Westminster, we would make the possession of a dog a



... Lady Porter

punishable offence. Tired of the mess and health hazards created by ubiquitous doggy droppings and outraged by the expense of relentless "pooper-scooping", we would hand out six-month custodial sentences to all those sufficiently mad to keep a dog in a town. Obviously, any female dog-owner of child-bearing age would have this sentence doubled. This would help underline the essential criminality of being a potentially pregnant woman.

Next we would turn our attention to folk who dump their refuse anywhere, anytime, without a care for the environment. Persistent offenders would be tied to Central Electricity Generating Board ships, dragged out into the North Sea, and forced to witness the Government's own genuine litter louts at work.

GRAZERS, those dreadful people who wander the streets of London, drinking from cans and eating from cartons, would be force-fed "100 per cent pure English beef" hamburgers until they keeled over from bovine spongiform encephalopathy. And, as soon as possible, we would implement a shoot-to-kill policy to deal with the city's mindlessly destructive graffiti daubers.

After a fact-finding mission to W1, I would insist that major routes out of town are no longer used as trainee hole-digging courses. I would order gas, water, electricity, sewerage and telephone companies to coordinate their excavations in order to ensure minimum aggravation and upheaval. And I would contemplate the eternal mystery of London road repair: why, if it takes one man four days to dig a hole, does it take 40 men one year to fill it in again?

Driving home along the Embankment, I would stare across the Thames to Lambeth, eying that mausoleum which once housed the now defunct Greater London Council. "If only that were in my patch," I would muse, my celebrated business sense rekindled. "I'm sure I could flog it off for anything up to 50p."

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FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

ROBIN JACOBS

Land of the culture crisis



Charles Bremner revisits Australia and wonders why it should be so on the defensive about its past, present and future

The man in the Crocodile Dundee hat winced at the sun as he glanced up to greet a stranger jogging past his lawn in the suburban Adelaide foothills. "Good on yer, mate," he offered with a grin, before returning to his mower. In most places these days you are lucky to get a nod or a grunt of recognition.

The friendly Aussie may be a stereotype reinforced by late by Paul Hogan, but the mower's reaction was a reminder that it is not just the wildlife that makes Australia different. Life in cities like Adelaide, and even in big bad Sydney, is still gentler and simpler. But it can be a tough job convincing the locals. "Don't you think we're becoming terribly Americanized?" is a refrain directed at a former South Australian on his first trip back since leaving school here 20 years ago. Assuming they mean the hectic commercialism of the worst side of America, the answer is no.

A sombre mood seems to be afflicting many Australians after a troubled decade in which the "lucky country" took something of an economic thrashing and ended with the downfall of one of its biggest business buccaneers — Alan Bond. Gambling and sometimes losing big has always been an Australian sport, but Bond's spectacular fall, rendered more savoury by his simultaneous triumph in the Sydney-Hobart yacht race, added to the general anxiety.

The Nineties around their swimming pools and barbecues, the talk was all about the new realism, the notion that the old happy-go-lucky Oz will stand or fall as an Asian trading nation and can no longer bank on its old status as favoured child of America or Europe.

Asia, as they say, is no longer the bit you fly over on the way to Ears Court. If Australia cannot compete with its prosperous neighbours, it risks turning into a banana republic, in the words of Paul Keating, the Treasurer. The new anxiety came through in polls run by newspapers during the New

Year period. These found that more than 50 per cent of Australians thought life would become harder in the next decade, an extraordinary figure given the optimism that has reigned so long here.

The country spends an inordinate amount of time scrutinizing its identity, swinging from pride in its sardonic optimism to self-conscious brooding about whether the place really matches up to the rest of the world. To judge by the reaction to Bond's long-awaited downfall, for example, you would think his worst sin was to have tarnished the image of the Australian entrepreneur abroad. That could explain why some commentators have resorted to emphasizing Bond's origins as a Pommie immigrant.

The other image — the bronzed, feisty, "no worries, mate" Aussie — has of course enjoyed spectacular promotion over the past few years thanks to Paul Hogan.

Single-handedly, "Mick" Dundee has acquainted nearly every American man, woman and child with the myth of the Australian male, the self-mocking and rather gentle macho who has no real equivalent in American folklore. His arrival gave the Americans their first intimation that Australia was not just a Wild West with kangaroos. However, it is not until they arrive as tourists that the Americans are exposed to the

other side of the coin, the suburban pretensions celebrated by Dame Edna Everage and the joyous philistinism of Barry Humphries's other persona, Sir Les Patterson, Cultural Attaché.

For all the natives' talk of a new cosmopolitan culture, the country still retains much of the old-fashioned charm of Anglo-Australia, a nation hammered together from a handful of colonies only 89 years ago this month.

Coming back after 20 years away from the land where I spent my teenage years, the predominant impression is the gentle, old-world flavour. In comparison with the brash new south of England or the jam-packed littorals of America, the pace is slow and gentle. People greet strangers with a "How're you going?". Even the police conducting the random breath tests employ a cheery chattiness with their victims.

In Sydney, the country's most international city, a police inspector makes the front page with a lament about the number of pedestrians who defy the lights and jay-walk. "I'm appalled at the nerve of people who just ignore the law," Chief Inspector McDonald complained to *The Sydney Morning Herald*. It is all very reassuring when you arrive from a city where the police are reluctant to investigate a burglary unless someone has been shot or beaten.

In Adelaide, a city still loaded with Victorian colonial charm, the bowl on impeccable lawns in their whites and little boys sit in doorways breaking in cricket bats. There have been changes in 20 years. Several American-style high rises blot the town centre and the sprawl of little bungalows has stretched out into the dry Mount Lofty hills and down the coast. With the "White Australia" policy a distant memory, you see Indian and Asian faces in the European crowd and you can find a brightly painted Vietnamese community centre nestling next to a pub. And there is the fast-growing wine industry that means you will hear taxi drivers and gardeners discussing a Chardonnay or a Cabernet Sauvignon rather as they do in California.



Many old conventions survive in Adelaide as if in a time warp, sometimes rubbing shoulders with the new. There are the old-style uniforms of the private school pupils, which mean you see sixth-form boys strolling around in neat little caps and the girls in old-fashioned tunics. And there are the rather stuffy old clubs. In the dining room at the Royal Adelaide Yacht Squadron, the members are reminded to wear long trousers and ties, even though they may have just come off one of the boats moored in the heat and dazzling sunshine a few yards away.

Yet it has members like Brian Davidge, an extrovert manager of the Jam Factory, a handicrafts centre. It is hard to imagine what the elders of the Yacht Squadron make of the ring in Davidge's left ear. He says they did convey to him their anxiety over the name he gave to his boat — "Bloody Mary" — in honour of his ex-wife. She was not amused, he recalls, when the committee barred her from the room when it interviewed him. For all the new cappuccino and croissant culture and the efforts of Germaine Greer, Australia remains pretty much a

man's country. At the Melbourne Cup, for example, women are still forbidden to cross a white line laid down on the ground in the members' enclosure.

The sense of other-worldliness is one of the most striking aspects of life Down Under. It is all the more remarkable given the way that satellites and computer links now bring in the day's news from the northern hemisphere and cut the old time lag that used to delay fashions and other trends.

Australia is going to bed before America and Europe is starting the day. Things just seem farther away.

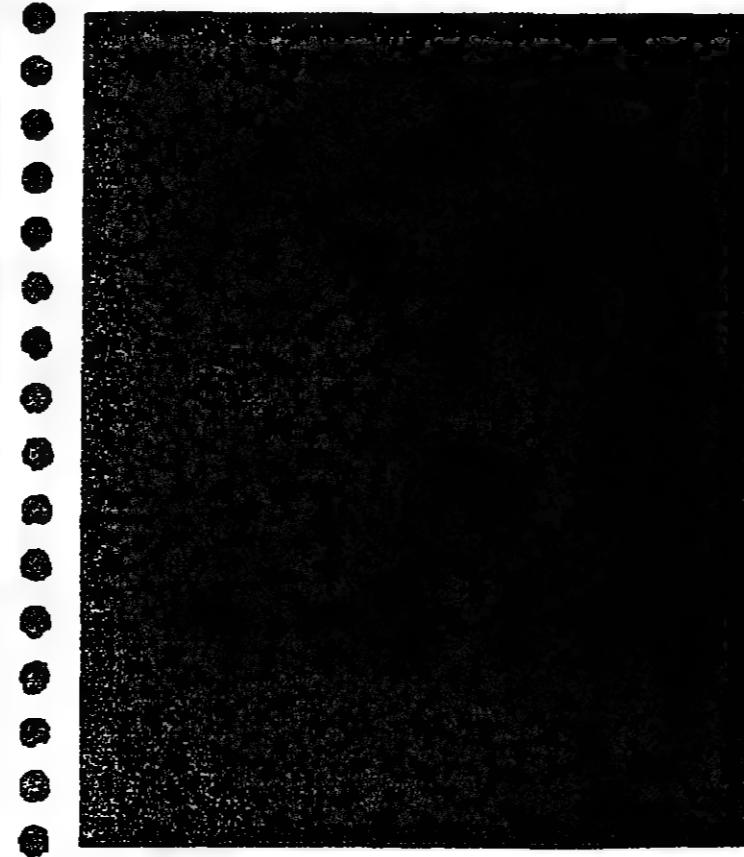
That could explain why the local television chose to inform viewers that two local aquarium dolphins had "met their destiny" at the hands of the vet — been put down as suspected TB carriers — before getting on to the war in Romania or the flight of General Noriega.

The sheer emptiness of the land — quite unnecessary given the world reputation of the local film industry, painters and writers — extends often to some hefty gov-

ernment interference. The conservative Liberal coalition vowed just before Christmas that it would knock the soap operas off the state television service once it got back in office. The much-ridiculed but hugely successful *Neighbours*, fans will be interested to know, will be spared the fate since it is produced by a commercial station. Occasionally, however, the high cultural profile comes a cropper. In late December, in an episode worthy of Les Patterson, a Sydney ballet company launched a new publicity slogan that reached a little too far in trying for a balletic pun in French. "Paris d'Excellence", the slogan proclaimed until the French embassy gently pointed out the unintended negative.

Anyway, one wonders who needs all that respect for European culture? In a world that is contracting by the day, where global anxieties are supplanting political ones, Australia often seems commodities — distance, natural resources and, above all, space. That is why the less anxious of the local worrying classes recognize that Australia's century probably has not even begun yet.

THE SUNDAY TIMES



THE END OF THE MONARCHY.

This Sunday The Sunday Times offers a unique and provocative view of the Royal Family.

Are they merely a costly anachronism? Are their attempts to keep up undermining their own future?

And will the accession of Prince Charles mark a new beginning — or the beginning of the end?

TOMORROW.

OUT & ABOUT

Nigel Andrew continues his tour of Britain's top tourist attractions with a visit to the vividly theatrical Tower of London

Blood and showmanship

A visit to the Tower of London is an essential initiation rite for native and foreigner alike. The buildings are an extraordinary survival in the heart of a ravaged city like London — a grand, largely-intact early medieval castle. But the buildings are not the point: the Tower is pure theatre, even pantomime. It presents, packaged and concentrated, a vivid, highly stylized version of English history — an English history to engage the emotions and stir the blood. At the Tower they have been doing it for centuries, and they do it with panache.

First they give you history to make your flesh creep — the grisly catalogue of torture, execution and murder, from the Princes in the Tower to Henry VI, Anne Boleyn, Lady Jane Grey, the Earl of Essex, Guy Fawkes, Lord Lovat, and hundreds and thousands of others done to death here or on Tower Hill nearby. But then they give you history as one long, colourful pageant, continuous and comforting, expressed in the pomp of state and in curious, time-honoured ceremonial. The later defences and safety distances the former, and both relegate history to the role of public entertainment.

They will tell you about Rudolph Hess's brief imprisonment in the Tower, but they won't mention the spies who were shot by firing squads here in both World Wars.

History as quaint continuity is embodied in the persons of the Yeoman Warders (or Beefeaters) who garrison the Tower precincts with their undressed uniform, some of them incongruously clutching walkie-talkies. Their blue and scarlet livery, like the splendid red and gold full-dress version, looks Tudor at the latest, but in fact, like so much of "old England", it was a Victorian creation.

The Yeoman Warders, for all their ceremonial function, are there for two routine purposes: to pose for photographs with members of the vast tourist army which daily invades the Tower (there is really no quiet season here) and to act as guides. I latched on to a group led by a Yeoman Warder with a ramrod-straight back, a grizzled beard and a particularly strong pair of lungs. This, I was soon to discover, was not his only distinction: the man was an artist, a stand-up patter-merchant whose act had been burnished to a rare perfection. If he hasn't got an Equity card, he should certainly get one.

As we stood by Tower Green, waiting for the stragglers to catch



Guiding lights: the Yeoman Warders enliven the Tower precincts with their splendid livery, but are there principally to pose for photographs and to direct the attention of the tourists

up, he passed the time of day with a lady in the front row. "Where are you from, madam?" "The antipodes?" "How does it feel to be standing the right way up?" His observations on various Australian tourists followed. Then he directed our attention to the White Tower, the great Norman keep with its quantity capped turrets — the very image of London on a million souvenirs across the world. Having reeled off an impressively brisk string of facts, he told us that "on the top is the finest flag in the world". Sure enough, every neck craned. "What are you looking up for?" the Beefeater barked in jocular indignation. "Don't you know which is the finest flag in the world?" Apologetic laughter.

Tower Green is one of London's most surprising open spaces, more like a cathedral precinct than a castle ward, with its brick and half-timbered houses built against the massive walls. But guards wearing bearskins parade up and down, "chiming" periodically with a great roaring and stamping of boots. They are there, our irrepressible guide assured us, as protection against double-gloved assassins and Avon ladies. We gravitated to the site of the private scaffold where the better class of execution was carried out, including (in our guide's words) "Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, alias Errol Flynn".

Soon we were filing obediently into the Chapel Royal of St Peter, a plain perpendicular building with some wonderful monuments. Here our Yeoman guide, relishing a fully captive audience, really came into his own, regaling us with blood-curdling tales of how Anne Boleyn's execution "completely severed her head from her little neck", how Margaret Pole was "literally hacked to death", how "in 1554 the blade was to bite into the slender neck of another young girl" (Lady Jane Grey). All this was leavened with humorous asides — "Phew! how does he

remember all those names?" "Sheer brilliance, madam" — and culminated in his parting thought for the day: "A smile is a curve that makes everything straight." Puff in his hands by now, we all filed out, offering effusive thanks and handsome tips.

Our guide had warned us about pickpockets, and the message is reinforced by frequent notices. They also warn of the peak power of the ravens, traditional guardians of the Tower. An artificially maintained population, they hop and lurch about the grounds, croaking horribly and striking up unwelcome mimics. Other notices are discreet and just informative enough: in fact the standard of interpretation and display throughout the Tower is really very high.

What is lacking, in the midst of the tallest throngs and in the

presence of such exquisitely preserved, restored and manicured remains, is any immediate sense of the flesh and blood history that lived here, the human lives constrained and ended in this grim fortress. It only occasionally peeps through — in the painstaking, defiant or pathetic carvings left by prisoners on the ancient stone walls, or in the sudden awesome surprise of St John's Chapel in the White Tower, a Norman interior of radiant purity. Otherwise the Tower of London today has the inert feel of a stage set, magnificently but dead.

Leaving aside the obvious attractions — the Crown jewels, the torture instruments, the astonishing collections in the Royal Armouries (where Henry VIII's giant coatee still incites comment) — what remains in my mind is a fascinating little display in the bowels of the White Tower (where so many poor souls were once tortured). This is an exhibition about the

THE CHINESE DANCE AND MINE COMPANY: Traditional prize-winning mime, accompanied by the London Chinese Orchestra. Also other Chinese and "minority" dances. Workshop between performances. Commonwealth Institute Main Galleries, Kensington High Street, London W8 (01-603 4535). Tomorrow 2.30pm and 4.00pm. Free.

WEST LONDON ANTIQUES FAIR: Well-established fair at which to browse or buy, whether you are first-timer, enthusiast, collector, or hunting for unusual home decorations or furnishings. Prices range from £25 to £25,000. Kensington Town Hall, Hornsey Street, London NW8. Today, tomorrow 11am-6pm. Admission £3, includes catalogue.

BARBICAN CHILDREN'S CINEMA CLUB: A different popular film is shown every week, plus a cartoon. This week: *When The Whales Came*, with Paul Schofield and Helen Mirren, and next week *The Bear*. There are two performances every Saturday at 11.30am and 2.30pm, and child members may bring up to two guests. Barbican Centre, Cinema One, Barbican, Silk Street, London EC2. Saturdays. Annual membership for child £2.50, admission to film, £1.25. No unaccompanied adults. Credit card membership (01-538 8891).

NOSTALGIA — REMEMBER THE FORTIES: An evening of dance and entertainment with Joe Loss and Orchestra, plus military music and popular songs of the era. NCO and Officers' Mess, Town Hall, Huddersfield, Yorkshire. Today 7.30pm-midnight. Tickets £7.50 from Huddersfield Information Centre (0484 422133).

BACKSTAGE TOURS OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE: Opportunity to go behind the scenes and see props, costumes, stage sets, lighting, etc. to learn more about what it takes to mount a production. National Theatre, South Bank, London SE1. Daily, except Sunday, at 10.15am, 12.30pm, 2.45pm, 5.30pm, and 6pm. On Olivier matinee days, tours at 10.15am, 12.45pm, and 5.45pm. Book at the Lyttleton Information desk (01-533 0880) between 10am and 11pm. Adult £2.50, concessions for children.

CRAWLEY RECORDS FAIR: Buy, sell, or exchange collectable records from the 1950s to the present day. The Hawn, Crawley, Sussex (0283 553555). Tomorrow 11am-5pm. Admission before noon £1, afternoon 50p.

EASTBOURNE IDEAL HOMES EXHIBITION: Trade stands, displays devoted to leisure and home interests and demonstrations. Entertainment for children today includes a disco party, tomorrow theatre and clown workshops. Devonshire Park Centre, Eastbourne, Sussex. Today, tomorrow 10.30am-6pm. Adult 50p, child 20p.

Judy Froshang

MUSEUMS

But is the Tower to lose one of its top draws? Simon Tait reports

In arms against a crisis

The great debate about admission charges for the national museums and galleries brings a wry smile to the face of the Master of the Armouries, Guy Wilson.

The Armouries is the other major magnet at the Tower of London, after the Crown jewels. But it is possible that they will have to close, and Wilson will have to use all his resources to preserve the world's best collection of ancient armour and weaponry. So bold moves, which could mean part of the Armouries will move out of London and even out of Britain, are being urgently considered.

There is a change to get into the Tower of London, but none of that money goes to the Armouries and it would be wrong, of course, to charge people again to get into another part of the complex.

The Armouries — the National Museum of Arms and Armour — has the same problems as the other nationalistic cramped space, small budgets and pay rises eating into what money there is.

Whether charging is the right or wrong way to raise extra funds, the chance, for Wilson and his board of trustees, would be a fine thing. All they have is the £3.4-million grant from the Department of the Environment. And more arms and armour than they know what to do with: only 32 per cent of the collections are on show, including objects on loan elsewhere.

"There are things we must do: things we'd like to do and things we can do, and the situation now and for the past few years is that we haven't been able to do the things we must do — preserving, adding to the collections, displaying them adequately and making them available for study and research," Wilson says.

"We hope to avoid a financial crisis, but if there is one we will have to think of priorities. It's most important to preserve the kernel of the collections, not just the ob-



Armour fit for an elephant: Guy Wilson with a prized exhibit

jects but the expertise of preserving them — the armours' techniques.

It's more important than opening the place to the public, and if society cannot afford to give us more money to keep the museum open then we will have to shut." Wilson has already warned employees that there may have to be staff reductions.

What is at stake is access to a collection which has been renowned since the Middle Ages.

"In 1489 a German gentle-

man, Wilvot von Schauenberg, asked to see the famous working arsenal and was given a tour, and in the 1580s the first visitors were admitted to

see the historic weapons of Henry VIII.

On Charles II's restoration

in 1660 the Armouries were

opened to a paying public for

the first time, with the main

attraction being the "Line of Kings", dummies representing the "good" kings of England — William the Conqueror but not William Rufus —

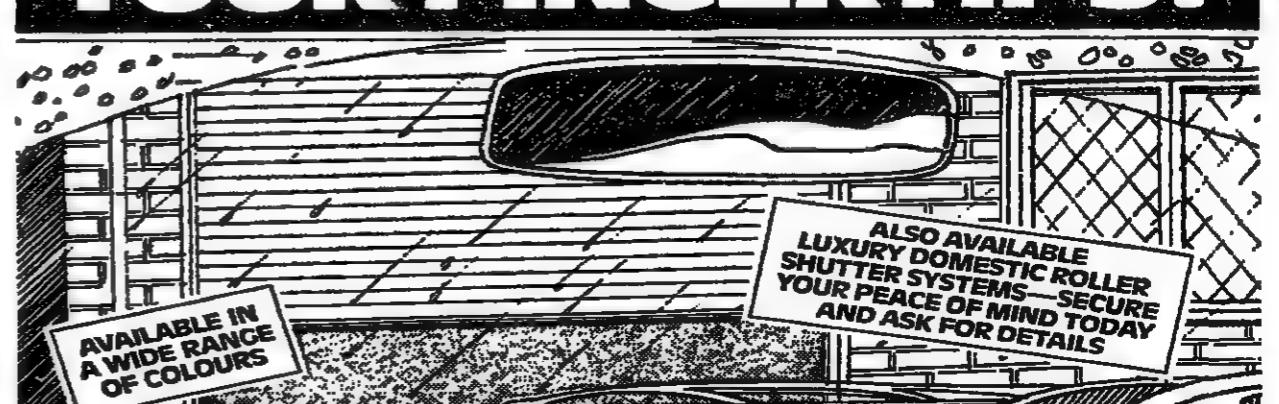
wearing armour and mounted on wooden horses. The Spanish Armoury, containing the weapons and instruments of torture taken from the Armada, was added a few years later.

"It's all slightly bewildering,

but very exciting," Wilson says. "When the ideas came up I thought it would have to be one or the other, but why not both?"

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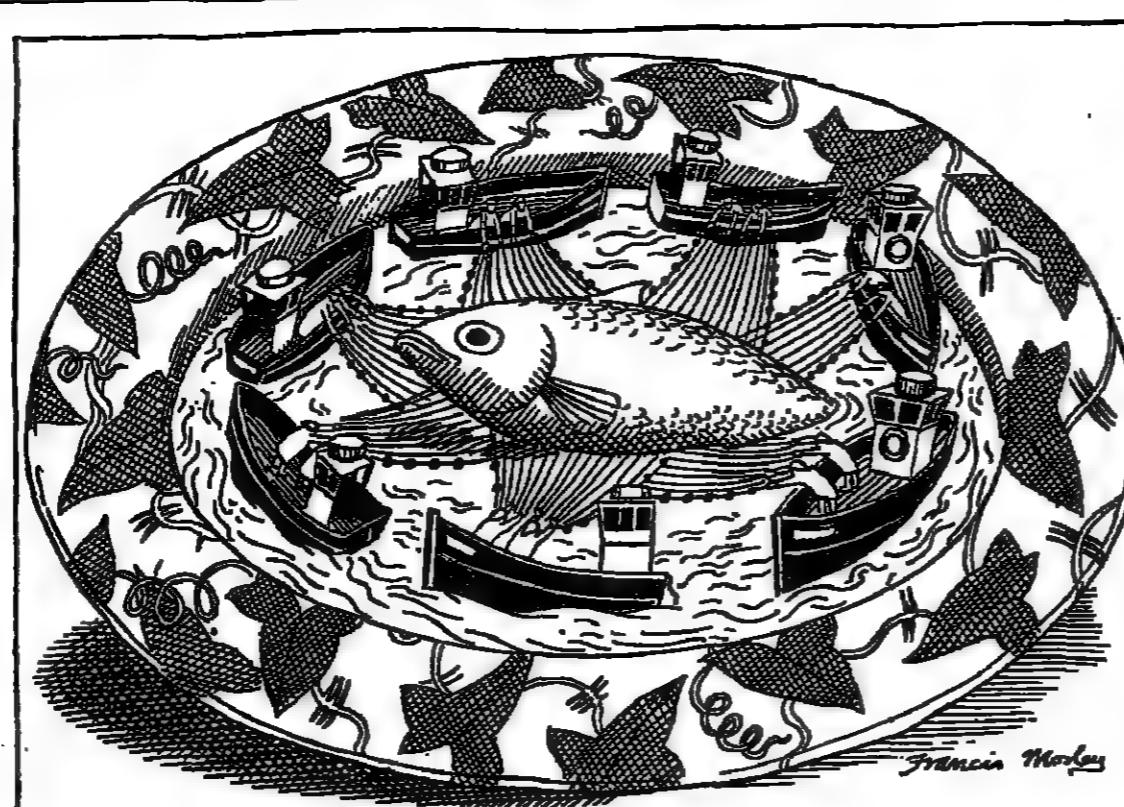
EATING OUT

Jonathan Meades samples the work of a chef who follows, perhaps too precisely, in the footsteps of his master

It's about 130 miles from Corfe Castle to the southern end of Wandsworth Common. It is, however, only a mile and a half from Wandsworth Town to the southern end of Wandsworth Common.

Last August I wrote about a joint in Corfe Castle whose chef had previously been employed as a sous-chef by Marco White at the ever more stony Harvey's on Wandsworth Common. I suggested that this young chef was "still a bit in thrall to his former employer, but that does not mask his determination to become his own man. Still... I'd aver that he's better when he apes White than when he tries to go it alone". This young chef has now abandoned the Isle of Purbeck and all that appealing fresh air and come back to the Smoke. He has also, apparently, abandoned for the minute any determination to become his own man in favour of paying perpetual homage to White. It would, perhaps, have been understandable had he elected to realize this specialized ambition in Maida Vale or Islington, both of which could do with a serious restaurant, but this young man has placed himself in the physical as well as gastronomic proximity of White. It strikes me as very run. But White, who is, shall we say, not immune to flattery, seems delighted and the young chef's employer seems delighted; and the punters of south London seem delighted. Me, I'm less easily delighted. The attraction of a restaurant which serves off-White or Whiteish cooking for little more than half of White's prices is easy enough to fathom. And White has his reputation sewn up, so he need not worry about the clone on the doorstep. But as far as I'm concerned, the cooking of the young chef, Tim Hughes, opens a can of worms. Influence is one thing, copyism is another, and plagiarism a third. Quite where Mr Hughes should be placed on this scale of deviance is unclear.

It is not as if the dishes that Mr Hughes is cooking belong to the common store. Neither he nor, necessarily, White deals in the currency of tradition. Obviously there would be nothing particularly remarkable about yet another joint serving steak and chips or fish soup with *röllie* or gravad lax with mustard sauce. The dishes that Mr Hughes has put on the menu at Snaffles (named after the cartoonist, but still a name to make you cringe) are, or were, specific to Harvey's. Now the cult of originality in cooking certainly went too far in the late Seventies and early Eighties, but this dogged unoriginality is equally nonphussing even if it does produce far better results. Mr Hughes is a parrot who has learned a good tune – but how



CULLEN SKINK

A paler shade of White

long can he bear to go on playing it? Maybe he is like one of those ancients who cooked the same dishes every day throughout their lives.

Anyway, this cooking by rote is pleasing – even if you have eaten at Harvey's. It is not the sort of food that one could eat every day. Lightness is not among the more evident attributes of White's cooking; and it's entirely absent in Hughes's. Where he unwittingly (I think) diverges from his master is in his failure to relieve the intensity and sweetness of sauces. Very rich *foie gras*, for instance, is served with an over-sweet sauce, lentils and button onions. This is the sort of dish that Steven Berkoff could play – heavy, ultra-violent, unyielding. And there are more like it. If the

portions were *amuse-gueule* size, one might feel less comprehensively mugged. But the combination of generous quantities and sledge-hammer flavours is defeating. On the other hand, there is an absolutely undeniable big-heartedness about the operation. The largest sweetbread I've ever seen – about

two-thirds of the size of a video-cassette – was served with a syrupy Sauternes sauce. Warm oysters are topped with caviar and cucumber and served in their shells on top of a predominantly salmon mousse. Undone (i.e., nearly raw) pigeon is done with a very potent elderberry sauce and Swiss chard in cream. Lobster ravioli (wonderful pasta) are rather redundantly topped with fried, shredded leek and done with a shellfish sauce that is – astonishingly – a mere bantam-weight. That dish and a splendid lemon tart were the only ones which suggested that Hughes had spared a thought for his punters' digestions. The other sweet was a *biscuit glacé* composed of (or tasting of) little but sugar.

Perhaps I've got it wrong. Perhaps

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Hughes is not so much a copyist of White as a parodist, a caricaturist. Whatever the niceties of that one, the dining room owes nothing to Harvey's. It is firmly within the suburban tradition of the late-Eighties – swags, hunting prints, floral displays, and so on. Its most attractive bit is the corridor between the bar at the front and the dining-room. This is a bargain-basement Piranesi, with bottles banged up behind bars, bags of gloom and raw brickwork. The wine list needs a thorough overhaul. There's an acceptable South Australian Pinot Noir, a lot from Bordeaux, very little from the Rhône. The set dinner at £21 is pretty good value; the place was crowded on a Monday night two weeks after Christmas – the worst night of the week at the worst time of the year for restaurants. Word has got around. £55.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE

Tim's
87 Walton Street, London SW3
(01-584 6711)

Fussy customers, accomplished French cooking, stingy portions, and a chef-patron who spends most of his time in his immediate vicinity growing his carrots. Successfully cultivate sweets, fine cheeses. Unexciting wines. £33.

One Sides
116 Knightsbridge, London SW1
(01-523 9383)

Good, rather eclectic cooking by a talented technician. When the chef/proprietor, Ian McAndrew, keeps things simple the goods are happily delivered. £25. The service is many, good natured. The night I dined, the place was full of carousing doctors from the Royal Free Hospital across the road.

The chef-proprietor was formerly at a place in Finchley Road called Quincey's. The style of the menu, if not of the establishment, is fairly similar. Cullen is a treacherous fishing town in Morayshire which has given its name to a smoked haddock and potato soup called Cullen Skink.

The version here is really good and is also served very hot – it is bewilderingly rare to encounter hot food nowadays. So top marks for flavour and temperature. The other first course, a cod and coquilles mouse with a butter sauce was also good gear. That was followed by lamb in pastry. Frankly, this is nearly always a dog either the pastry's soggy and the lamb raw, or the meat's grey, or... well, perm your own combination of shortcomings. This wasn't a big dog, mind, more a cocker spaniel. I had veal with noodles and a perfectly judged meat sauce.

The vegetables are dreary – side plates of red cabbage, boiled potatoes and so on. And the sweets are nothing to beat on about – a plate of sorbets included one which tasted as though it had been made from an unpleasantly over-ripe pear. There are quite a few half bottles on offer and the wine list is generally well thought-out. £60.

Westover Hall
Park Lane, Milford on Sea, Lympstone (0590 43044)

An agreeable oddity: a south coast hotel (the view across the Solent to the Needles is wonderful) which is both efficient and impersonal. More European than English. The cooking is, within its limitations, considered and expertly carried off.

Thel Pavilion
42 Rupert Street, London W1
(01-247 6333)

Excellent premises, variable cooking.

Chicken in pandan leaves is worth investigating and so is the prawn soup. Better give a mile to the greasy battered deep-fried veg and the indistinct soups. Service is rather chaotic and very slow. £34.

Chopchop
22 St Christopher's Place, London W1 (01-486 0777)

Cannibalism and gloom, but otherwise reliable. The cooking of standard issue dishes is sound and because the menu opens very beyond the usual repertoire into trotter dishes and offal dishes. The green curry is probably the finest in London. Without doubt. £42.

Thai Pepper
15 Furham Crescent, London NW3 (01-385 6555)

Marvelous grilled scallops, fish

and chips, great lamb with ginger and garlic, and beef with chilli and baby asparagus.

Expensive wines. £50.

Baithi Thai
21a Fifth Street, London W1 (01-437 0404)

Charmless and gloomy, but otherwise reliable. The cooking of standard issue dishes is sound and because the menu opens very beyond the usual repertoire into trotter dishes and offal dishes. The green curry is probably the finest in London. Without doubt. £42.

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15 Furham Crescent, London NW3 (01-385 6555)

Marvelous grilled scallops, fish

and chips, great lamb with ginger and garlic, and beef with chilli and baby asparagus.

Expensive wines. £50.

Baithi Thai
21a Fifth Street, London W1 (01-437 0404)

Charmless and gloom, but

otherwise reliable. The cooking of standard issue dishes is sound and because the menu opens very beyond the usual repertoire into trotter dishes and offal dishes. The green curry is probably the finest in London. Without doubt. £42.

Westover Hall
Park Lane, Milford on Sea, Lympstone (0590 43044)

An agreeable oddity: a south coast hotel (the view across the Solent to the Needles is wonderful) which is both efficient and impersonal. More European than English. The cooking is, within its limitations, considered and expertly carried off.

Thel Pavilion
42 Rupert Street, London W1
(01-247 6333)

Excellent premises, variable cooking.

Chicken in pandan leaves is worth investigating and so is the prawn soup. Better give a mile to the greasy battered deep-fried veg and the indistinct soups. Service is rather chaotic and very slow. £34.

Chopchop
22 St Christopher's Place, London W1 (01-486 0777)

Cannibalism and gloom, but

otherwise reliable. The cooking of standard issue dishes is sound and because the menu opens very beyond the usual repertoire into trotter dishes and offal dishes.

THE TIMES COOK

Marmalade with everything

Frances Bissell prepares to be inundated with letters as she again tackles the most controversial, bitter-sweet preserve

DIANA LEADBETTER

Why I am writing this is quite beyond me. Last year I swore I would never write about marmalade again in this column. The first time I wrote about it, just as the Seville oranges were coming into the shops, I was taken aback by the amount of passion in the correspondence provoked by my comments and recipes. Never mind, I thought, next year I won't get caught like this. When the following January rolled around, I gave an expert's recipe, that of Alan Davidson, the food scholar and historian currently working on the *Oxford Companion to Food*, who has been making marmalade to the satisfaction of himself and his family for more than 40 years. But still the correspondence poured in.

I am not alone in observing this phenomenon. Food writer colleagues tell me that marmalade generates more letters than any other topic. We have come to the conclusion that it is the one thing in the culinary world that the British feel passionate about. Everyone clearly feels that they have the secret for making the best marmalade. It's all in the soaking, the grating, the shredding, the skimming, the boiling, or whatever. And I am filled with admiration at the quantities you make. I won't say how many pounds, because one of you is sure to tell me that you regularly make double that amount.

The next part of this column is not for marmalade makers, but for those who have never made it and think they might like to have a go if it wasn't such a chore. It really need not be, as I discovered a few weeks ago. We do not eat much marmalade, but since there were some limes and lemons in the fruit bowl that needed to be used, I thought I would make a few jars. I liked the look of Neil Heston's basic marmalade recipe published in 1950: "Boil whole Seville oranges for three and a half hours in plenty of water, then chop coarsely, removing pips. Add 1-1/2 lb sugar to each pound of fruit and half pint of water; boil briskly for half an hour, then pour." She goes on to describe success with other combinations of fruit, and I decided it would work well with the limes and lemons. By accident I forgot to switch off the heat, and the fruit cooked at the lowest possible temperature for about eight hours. By then I did not feel like dealing with it and left it overnight. Next day the fruit was cold and, therefore, easy to handle. I quartered and sliced it very thinly, although I could have simply given it a quick burst in the food processor. Then it was an easy matter to squeeze out the pips. The firm pulp had become jelly-like, having released all its pectin. I used some of the cooking liquid for boiling up the fruit and sugar, and I was very pleased with the intensely fruity result. The bonus was the extra pectin-rich liquid with which I made a mango and tangerine marmalade. I cut the tangerine peel into thin strips, and cooked it in the liquid until soft before adding the tangerine pulp, scooped out with a teaspoon, and the chopped mango pulp and sugar.

For many people marmalade is the essential breakfast item, but it has its uses as a condiment and flavouring. Many meats, such as duck, chicken, pork, veal, rabbit



and pheasant, are well matched with bitter-sweet orange or other citrus flavours which can be imparted by adding a little marmalade to a sauce, a marinade or a glaze. It also goes surprisingly well with fish dishes. Baked batter puddings, steamed puddings, casserole puddings such as soufflés and pancakes will all take a marmalade sauce. And it makes a very good sweetening agent for apples and pears, as an occasional replacement for honey or sugar. The flavour of marmalade is already concentrated and, added to quick-cooking dishes, it gives them an extra dimension of flavour that gives the impression of long, slow cooking. I am not suggesting that you flavour everything with marmalade, but here are a few ideas for using up the jars in your cupboard before your next marmalade making session.

Spiced grilled scones of fish (serves 4 as a starter)
Use monkfish, conger eel and trimmed scallops if possible, and light or dark sesame oil not the pale, cold-pressed oil
1lb/455g fish filleted, skin off the bone
2tbsp orange or grapefruit juice
2tbsp orange or grapefruit marmalade
2tbsp sesame oil
1tsp soy sauce
pepper

4 dried apricots, soaked and chopped
1tbsp pine kernels or chopped walnuts
1tbsp finely chopped parsley

salt
pepper

Cut the fish into 1in/2.5cm cubes, and leave the scallops whole if using them. Heat the juice and marmalade and strain it into a bowl. Mix in the sesame oil, seasoning and spices, and stir in the fish until it is well coated. Marinate for 30 to 40 minutes. Thread the fish on to skewers, and place under a moderately hot grill for about eight minutes, turning and basting from time to time. Then arrange the skewers on individual plates, sprinkle with the toasted sesame seeds and orange or grapefruit slices or segments.

Stuffed orange-glazed duck breasts (serves 4)
4 duck breasts
1 orange
1tbsp orange marmalade
2tbsp Southern Comfort or whisky
Stuffing
5oz/140g cooked rice or 3oz/85g soft breadcrumbs
1 small onion, peeled and finely chopped
1 celery stalk, trimmed and finely chopped

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DRINK

Burns' Night celebrations call for the finest whisky, Jane MacQuitty writes, which means single malt

Make mine a single

Cots and Sassenachs alike should do the decent thing this Thursday and celebrate Burns' Night with a dram or two of malt whisky. This is not just because a great single malt is one of the most satisfying spirits, but because our whisky industry is still shaky after a depressed and troubled decade. The worst could be over, however, and malt whisky's ever-increasing sales, up 10 per cent last year to almost half a million cases, look promising. Although the lighter, blended whiskies account for the lion's share of the whisky market, future hopes are pinned on single malts.

This is as it should be, for in Robert Burns's day all whisky was malt. Then Scottish whisky merchants saw that blended whisky, made predominantly from cheaper, faster-maturing, unmalted grain spirit, produced in a batch or continuous Coffey still and given flavour and finesse with a dash of a fine single malt, could boost sales and oust malts from their dominant position. (Single malt is a confusing term, but is used because it is the unblended product from one distillery.) More than a century and a half later malt whisky is starting to redress the balance.

A good blended, single-distilled Scotch whisky made from several cereals, as opposed to a single malt's double-distilled one (barley), could contain as much as 60 per cent flavour-enhancing

malt, but the average whiskies contain about 40 per cent, and many contain even less.

It is Scotland's distinctive combination of double distillation in a copper pot still, malted barley, soft, often peat-influenced spring water, and a damp, cold climate that make single malts so fine. The oak casks that the colourless spirit is aged in, gradually gathering colour and flavour, also have a great influence on the character of the final product.

This also explains why the finest dram from any single malt house will always be tasted in the distillery manager's office, when water from the local well will be used to cut the whisky. 50-50 is the acknowledged finest blend.

The large, onion-shaped copper pot stills perhaps affect the end result most. Distillery managers are so convinced of this that when a well-matured still has to be renewed an identical one is erected in its place, complete with any dents or knocks that the old one may have had. No one knows exactly what the copper pot still contributes to the end product, but it is clear that the Brodick-magnesian stills at Glenmorangie, the largest in Scotland, produce lighter flavours than the small, squat stills with their heavier, fuller-flavoured spirits, like those used by Macallan.

Single malts are expensive, and none of us wants to splash out on a disappointing Burns' Night bottle. As it has been some time since I last evaluated the high street own-label single malts, I thought I would track down the best of these, plus some of the rarer single malts. I tasted, or rather "nosed", six high street bottlers' blind, with Majestic's Five Year Old blend slipped in to keep me on my toes. Top, but only just, was Tesco's Islay



Single Malt Whisky, a fine 10-year-old priced at £12.75, whose splendid, earthy scent and taste would make a great introduction to an Islay single malt. Easier to appreciate and almost as impressive was Thistler's Glen Tarra, a 10-year-old, whose spicy, musty, gingery style is excellent value at £11.19. The ordinary 10-year-old from Tesco (£11.49) and eight-year-old from Waitrose (£10.50) came next, followed by Majestic's blended offering (£7.95). Last was Sainsbury's Twelve Year Old (£14.50), which had a slightly musty taste.

A much more palatable exercise was the line-up of 22 rare single malts. I also "nosed" these blind, and was delighted that Lagavulin's Sixteen Year Old Islay malt came first. This magnificent malt is what a great Islay offering is all about — a delicious, big, bold,

FOOD

Mutton dressed as lamb

It's time for the British to stop giving mutton the cold shoulder — before new EC regulations mean that it's too late

Let us return to our muttons, as the French say when they want to get down to business. The trouble is, though, that all our muttons have turned into lambs.

If you buy home-produced fresh lamb in the next few weeks you are likely, despite the advent of breeds which lamb twice a year, to be getting something which might pass for mutton. It is hardly likely to be called that, though. In the North and in Scotland, where some traditionalists may still ask for mutton, they are served with the same meat as people who come in and ask for lamb. Elsewhere mutton was given the cold shoulder (which was originally a cold shoulder of mutton — the leftovers) long ago.

It is a complete reversal of the traditional view — which was that sheep were not really worth eating until they were three years old. It was not turkey that Sam Weller looked for to make up a "friendly swarthy", but "a boiled leg of mutton with the usual trimmings", while John Home's "bold and dauntless Caledonian" stood so well because "Old was his mutton, and his claret good".

"Mutton of two years old is flabby, pale and tasteless", a Victorian authority decreed. "To suit the palate of an epicure, a sheep should never be killed earlier than its third or later than its fifth year, at which age the mutton will be firm and succulent, and full of the richest gravy." Mutton from three to five-year-old animals is, farmers and butchers who have tasted it agree, much finer meat and better in flavour than mere yearling hogget, which is what we get nowadays.

And it may soon become quite impossible — if EC regulations close down the small on-farm slaughterhouses where traditional butchers, like Stillmans, have killed and cut their own meat, rather than receiving it from a processing plant. "With the numbers we kill we can never afford to have meat inspectors standing around at £30 or £40 an hour," Cook says.

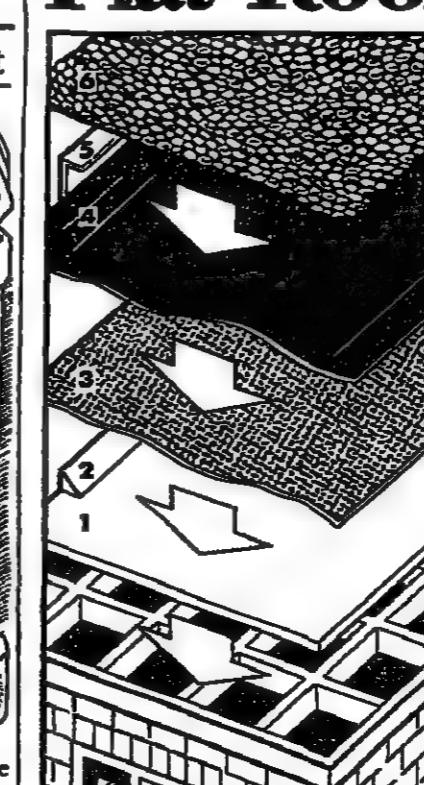
Already there is a disincentive against farmers taking sheep to a local butcher for rapid slaughter (which would be ideal as regards the quality of the meat afterwards) because fat lamb premiums are only paid if the stock goes through a market.

If the butchers who kill their own meat are forced out of business, quite a lot more of Britain's culinary heritage will, I'm afraid, be as dead as mutton. Stillmans has, for instance, collected 700 signatures in defence of its farm-slaughtered and dry-plucked turkeys and chickens. They, too, are threatened by the EC and the relentless advance of industrialized food processing.

Robin Young

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Robert Nye on the uniquely strange vision of Boris Pasternak

The writer as poet

POETRY

SECOND NATURE

46 poems by Boris Pasternak
Translated by Andrei Navrosov

Peter Owen, £13.95

POEMS 1953-1988

By Anthony Thwaite

Hutchinson, £8.95

obscure, half-defined in a shyly oblique and take-it-or-leave-it way:

My sister — life — is again out flooding, Smashed, like spring rain, against what is past. But people with pendants are subtly pedantic, Attentively stinging, like snakes in the grass.

In the sad and angry hullabaloo which surrounded Boris Pasternak throughout his last years, it was sometimes forgotten in the West that he was primarily a poet — perhaps the most important Russian poet of the century, though there are some of us who would give that honour to Mandelstam. Yet the Nobel Prize was offered for his "important contributions to contemporary poetry" as much as for his one novel, *Dr Zhivago*, and it is at least arguable that it is the poems — with all their puzzled and introverted music — for which he will ultimately be remembered.

Pasternak is a difficult poet, so I am told, even in the original. Andrei Navrosov speaks of the temptation to translate him into Russian — a witty way of referring to the unique strangeness of his vision, as well as the peculiarity of his diction.

Navrosov values the work up to about 1932 the highest, and makes an excellent case for this preference in the introduction and notes to the 46 poems which he gives us in English versions as *Second Nature*. These early poems are full of surprising, but not arbitrary, images drawn from Pasternak's sense of the fragmentation of modern life. Sometimes these images are so startling that they hold the attention too much (as a too brilliant necktie might ruin the appearance of an otherwise well-dressed man), but usually they are inventive and exact in equal measure, the working parts of a poetry always packed with feeling and intelligence, even if its total import seems doubtful.

Poems 1953-1988, by Anthony Thwaite, contains much well-judged rhetoric, and a few poems where the author seems about to speak through the mask in what might be taken to be his own voice rather than that of a suburban Yeats or a rather improbably bardic Philip Larkin. I can admire Thwaite's command of technique, but can't help thinking that he's at his best when he is clumsiest, as in "Difficult":

Not much is simple: you can never say Straight out what ten more minutes will make worse.

His most interesting poems have what a late poem of Pasternak's memorably defined as an "after-thunder freshness" (this is a translation by the Russian poet's younger sister, Lydia Pasternak Slater). The trouble with them, perhaps, is that unlike Pasternak's, they never quite give us the thunder itself.

We are not always amused

Hugo Vickers

ROYAL DRESS

By Valerie Cuming

Batsford, £17.95

THE ROYAL

GUNROOM AT

SANDRINGHAM

By David J. Baker

Phaidon/Christie's, £70

Batsford originally wanted Valerie Cuming to create a picture book on royal and court dress, but she decided to take a more idiosyncratic approach. She had been first curator of the Court Dress Collection at Kensington Palace, and is now deputy director of the Museum of London, which houses many royal robes. She therefore wished to analyse rather than merely illustrate.

I enjoyed her historical section and soon learned that she was a stern and keen critic, sometimes dismissive. A favourite recurring word in this book is "absurd", which appears in one form or another at least a dozen times. Later on I have to confess I was less happy. Her approach to the present royal family struck me as somewhat hostile. Perhaps they rather bored her, but this does not make for enjoyable reading. I prefer what might be called the enthusiastic approach. I cite a line such as: "Sophisticated and well advised public figures (amongst whom royalty are rarely to be found)." And she cannot surely mean to describe Princess Michael of Kent as "the first true Cinderella, of the modern variety". She is also analytical to the point of being personal in such phrases as "her generous, somewhat low-slung, and heavily Windsor bosom".

For a scholar she makes one or two errors: the Queen did not transfer from military uniform to a pastel coat and hat at Trooping the Colour as a way "to modernize royal ceremonial dress", but because she did not wish to embark on the training of a new horse in her 60s. (It was a wise decision as the Queen was clearly still quite capable of riding on parade.) Edward VII would hardly have demanded that Queen Alexandra change her Garter star "from the left of her bodice to the right": it would have been the reverse. And George V is dressed as Admiral not Admiral of the Fleet in the photograph at Edward VII's funeral — three rings on the sleeve, not four.

I was annoyed by the disparaging references to Cecil Beaton, a source the author frequently drew on, while clearly finding him absurd. I wondered why she chose a photograph of the Windsors "marred by the absurd screen and draperies against which Cecil Beaton posed them", when there was such a wide choice of other Beaton wedding photographs available. Valerie Cuming has worked for four years on this book. She concludes: "Fashion equals frivolity, invites criticism, and devalues the magic; stylized grandeur equals dignity, invites respect, and promotes historical continuity."

The Royal Gunroom at Sandringham is a different kind of book, lavishly illustrated and expensively produced. Over the years many books have emerged dealing with aspects of royal life: their houses, their farms, their jewels, indeed their dress. This one is destined for the experts who understand and like to look at photographs of handsome royal shotguns and pistols. At £70 for 160 pages it is elevated to connoisseur level, and handsome though it is, its interest is limited. It would certainly not have tempted me to reach for my cheque book.

In his preface, Prince Philip tells us that the collection is particularly good, because the guns were too valuable to be thrown away without being valuable enough to make selling a good proposition. The author, David Baker, has been immensely thorough. I think this book would make a handsome "house guest" present from anyone invited for an expensive week's gunning in August.

Driving Through Cuba, by Carlo Gobbi (Abacus, £4.50) Entertaining portrait and jaunts in one of the last, increasingly isolated outposts of evangelical Communism. Flemish Cities Explored, by Derek Stry (The Bodley Head, £10.95) From Memling to convivial cafés, with maps and pictures, around the spectacular blossoming of Flemish art and architecture, just over the water.

When Sisterhood Was in Flower, by Florence King (Black Swan, £2.99) Funny on feminism: movement in Boston in the 1930s, original paperback. The Aeneid, by Virgil, translated by Robert Fitzgerald (Penguin Classics, £5.99) I sing of warfare and a man at war... quite formal, fairly stately, five-footed verse.

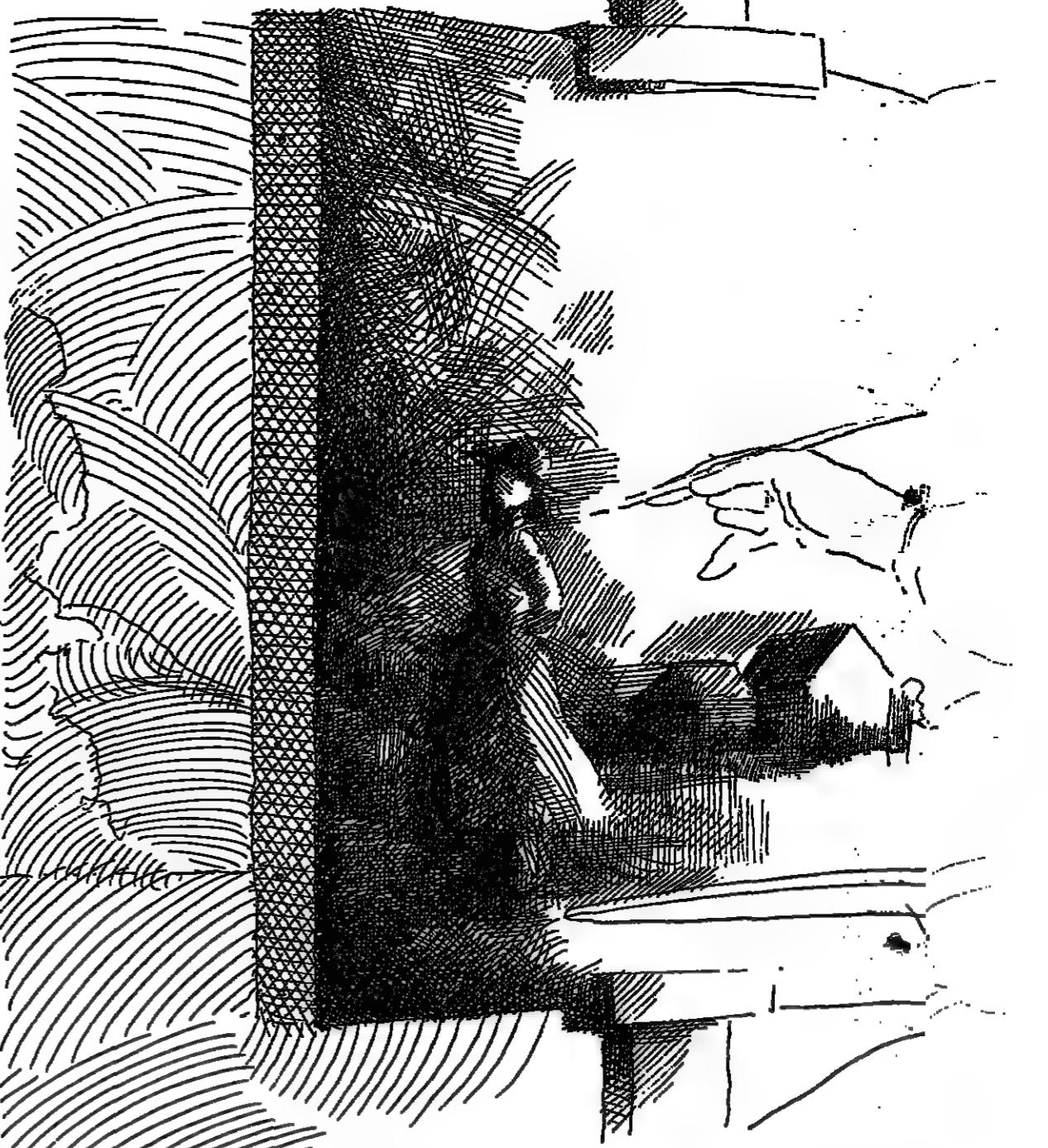
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Somerset Maugham, by Frederic Raphael (Cardinal, £24.99) Lively and controversial monograph, arguing among much else that the clever old saurian was preserved from death by his gayness.

The Spanish Civil War 1936-39, by Paul Preston (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £7.95) Fair-minded and gripping narrative and analysis with vivid news pictures.

At first, reality was but a pale reflection of this thesaurus of felicities. "Ramsay Mac" and "G.B.S." were only bogymen; girls no more than "fancy dressed creatures"; and when Britain abandoned the Gold Standard, Vansittart inevitably "imagined a flag of 15 carat gold, abandoned upright



Lost in Iris

Victoria Glendinning finds few rays of light in Iris

stories about people who are only end

FAMILY SINS

And Other Stories

By William Trevor

The Bodley Head, £11.99

"useless longing to change circumstances that had been".

In "Kathleen's Field" there is even a young man to dream of rescuing Kathleen from life as a skivvy to swill Mrs O'Shaughnessy, who runs the grocery and bar in a small Irish town. Her father "borrows" money from the O'Shaughnessys to buy a field. The money is paid back by Kathleen's wages, so she is penniless — as well as exploited, homely, and sexually abused by heavily-breathing Mr O'Shaughnessy. A bargain's a bargain, as his mother says.

The title story, "Family Sins", is one of several in which the hatreds and jealousies of one generation are carried over into the next. Misty, pretty young girls, as in this story, are the victims. The young men who see the girls' plight are unable to love them enough to rescue them. In "In Love with Ariadne", set in a boarding-house in Dublin, a student takes out the landlady's sweet, shy daughter just once — after which she is banished to a convent. She is the daughter of a suicide, and so unfitted for love. The student, who thinks she "had the look of a saint", is left with a

victims, and two dead rabbits. It might as well not have happened. The survivors bury their dead, and their grief, and carry on — till journalists from an English newspaper violate their privacy. "What kind of people are they?" ask the old couple — who have nevertheless taken money from the journalists in exchange for an interview. These 12 stories are about shame, fear and failure, blunted by fortune, and sharpened, unpleasantly, by cruelty and greed.

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It's not only the sins of a parental generation that "paralyse the present. If you are deprived, all family background, like the young couple reared in institutions in "A Trinity", who books a trip to Venice and find themselves on pensioners' holiday in Switzerland: you are still a loser. Nothing can be done, from the beginning.

Out of Israel

Hugh David

PATHS FROM A WHITE HORSE

By Peter Vansittart

Quartet, £6.95

The phrase is hackneyed, but true nevertheless: Peter Vansittart is a writer's writer. And in *Paths from a White Horse*, more of a meditation than a structured autobiography, he recalls how he came to be one.

Successive chapters do normally relate how a lonely, only child whose parents were mysteriously "out East" survived infancy, prep school, Haileybury, Oxford and the pubs and rebuffs of literary London, but only in the way that *Hamlet* is about what happens when the Prince returns to Denmark. As readers of his novels will know, Vansittart is primarily concerned with secret worlds and the prancing white horses of the imagination, and in the first half of this "writer's memoir" he explores the inner landscapes of childhood with the authority of a Livingstone.

His was a loner's literary childhood, dominated by an early case of what Denis Norden would later dub "literary autism". When just "a kid" — and thus "likely to be napped" — he believed that "overdraft" really meant "death from cold". He was (and has miraculously remained) entranced by the sheer incantatory power of words such as "esplanade", "troika" and "charcoal-burner". He learned to be in towns with names like Cyst St Mary or Nijni-Novgorod, and to take his place alongside writers who "tended to have names substantiating the glamour of their trade": Rafael Sabatini, H. de Vere Stacpoole, E. Phillips Oppenheim, Harrison Ainsworth, L. du Gard Peach. (Sadly, he never completed a novel begun under his own *nom de guerre*, E. Mountstuart Temple.)

At first, reality was but a pale reflection of this thesaurus of felicities. "Ramsay Mac" and "G.B.S." were only bogymen; girls no more than "fancy dressed creatures"; and when Britain abandoned the Gold Standard, Vansittart inevitably "imagined a flag of 15 carat gold, abandoned upright

on a desolate shore". Soon, however, real villains emerged — Mussolini, the Führer and his storm-troopers all had sinisterly appropriate names — but in 1937 and 1938 even they barely impinged on what had become a desperate search for "the Best Friend".

He appeared in 1939. As he was about to start his "epic" career at Oxford, Vansittart met Wilfrid Israel near the Leg of Mutton Pond on Hampstead Heath. Divine intervention surely that in such a singularly-named spot he should encounter another who shared his infatuation with words, who could talk about everything "from Big-mack to the derivation of a local pub-sign, the Naked Boy".

It was as if talking to Israel finally convinced him to "go public". He began committing to paper the words which had jangled and dazzled in his imagination for the previous 20 years, and became a writer. In wartime Fitzrovia he met George Orwell, "once stepped over Dylan Thomas" and survived Julian Macauley-Ross's stinging (but characteristic) verdict on his first novel: "Chianti book. Yellow cover. Title blocked in blue. Very pompous."

Israel was killed in 1943; but, like Vansittart, we owe him a debt of gratitude. This dazzling, generous, intoxicating book has a whiff of adolescent wonder about it. To read it is to stand in the wind, near the Leg of Mutton Pond, mesmerized by the potentialities of words and the world. Macauley-Ross-like, however, it is also only fair to comment: Quartet book. Appalling cover. Brown-grey and sludge green. Title dull brown. Unreadable from three feet.

New York is a miscellany of "local colour" pieces of journalism written about his life and low life in New York in 1913. She entered the cage of *Djuna Barnes* at the New York Zoological Society to do a review, and noted "a queer drawing-room caution" about po-

Tale wagging

FOR CHILDREN

Brian Alderson

FU-DOG

By Rumer Godden

Illustrated by Valerie Littlewood

Julia MacRae Books, £9.95

Here is a bold exhibition of Chinese conjuring. All the paraphernalia are laid out for an arch little story of a kind not much in fashion today. The girl Li-ia receives from Great Uncle green satin Fu-dog — a small replica of the one that used to guard temples and palaces. Fu-dog would seem to exert magic powers, not greatly appreciated by Li-ia's older brother Malcolm. ("Stuff," says he.) But some sort of magic does flow. The children manage to get themselves on to a train for a 400-mile journey to London, and Fu-dog is deeply implicated in what then happens: meetings with Wu-uncle and Great

Uncle, a Chinatown parade, calamity and restoration, feasting and prezies.

Large chunks of this narrative ought by rights to collapse under their own preposterousness, but that is to reckon without Miss Godden's particular brand of wizardry. The events are strung together with an assured conviction. A clear sense of the real substantiates the fantastic; and behind the standard children's book phrasings there are the sharp observations and the crisp rejoinders of an individual voice. This strange mixture of conventions is mirrored in Valerie Littlewood's ornate illustrations.

These are events that we want to read about, events that Brittain does not want to write about. *Wartime Chronicle* illustrates how the diarist preferred to live from day to day: "I take each thing as it comes and I try not to think too much about the complete shattering of my life since a year ago. And since two decades ago". Brittain had experienced a terrible amount of pain during her life. In *Chronicle of Youth* the war-weary undergraduate diarist lost her brother, her lover, her friends and her idealism. So did many. But not so many would go on to suffer the suicide of an invalid father. Her dearest friend, Winifred Holtby, then died within a month, while only in her late thirties.

These are events that we want to read about, events that Brittain does not want to write about. *Wartime Chronicle* illustrates how the diarist preferred to live from day to day: "I take each thing as it comes and I try not to think too much about the complete shattering of my life since a year ago. And since two decades ago". Brittain had experienced a terrible amount of pain during her life. In *Chronicle of Youth* the war-weary undergraduate diarist lost her brother, her lover, her friends and her idealism. So did many. But not so many would go on to suffer the suicide of an invalid father. Her dearest friend, Winifred Holtby, then died within a month, while only in her late thirties.

When she wasn't at the Peace Pledge Union, she'd be at the Federal Union, or the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Then again it could be the I.V.S., the C.B.C.O., the C.R.B., or the F.A.U., or indeed the I.L.P., the I.V.S.P., the L.N.U., or the U.D.C., not to mention the U.N.R.R.A., the W.I.L., the W.V.S. or, of course, the good old P.O. She gave speeches and more speeches, wrote letters and more letters. She wrote books on the war and pamphlets on the war. This is her diary of the war. Clearly this campaigning pacifist was much too busy to fill her private writings with either contemplation of the soul or detailed observation of wartime Britain: one conclusion drawn from reading these diaries is, in fact, that Brittain was much too busy to write a diary at all.

However, she does find time to

note down the state of the weather

and of the crocuses, the best places

for buying hot water bottles and for

having hair shampooed. In its own

way, of course, this is fascinating

stuff, but it is fundamentally trivial.

As such, *Wartime Chronicle* is a

frustrating read. It takes a strong

magnifying glass and a lot of

determination to uncover the personal thoughts and the private life of perhaps the most celebrated pacifist of the Second World War.

It is only just possible to piece together a full picture of the public Vera Brittain, the Vera Brittain who hated the "vulgarily jubilant" Churchill, hated the bombing of German civilians, and hated the food blockades of enemy-occupied stuff, but it is fundamentally trivial. As such, *Wartime Chronicle* is a frustrating read. It takes a strong magnifying glass and a lot of

determination to uncover the personal thoughts and the private life of perhaps the most celebrated pacifist of the Second World War.

It

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7.30	Grieg Piano Concerto Saint-Saëns Symphony No. 3 (Organ) £30 £17.15 £12 £10 £7 £4.50 RPO Ltd
Mon	ACADEMY OF ST. MARTIN IN THE FIELDS Sir Neville
26 Jan	(cond) Lynn Brown (Mn) Yuri Bashmet (vn) Mozart Symphony No. 35
7.30	(Haffner) Sinfonia Concertante in E flat Major Sinfonia No. 36 (Linz) £16 £13.50 £11 £8.50 £5.25 Academy Concert Society Ltd
Thu	YEMUDI MUNIRUN WITH VMSO Young Musicians Symphony
25 Jan	Orchestra, James Blair (cond) Yemudi Munirun (vn) (cond) Bach Concerto 3 vnts BWV 1064 Prokofiev Sym. No. 1 (Classical) Brahms Sym No. 4 £12.50 £10.50 £8.50 £7.50 £4.50 VMSO Soc
7.30	Academy Concert Society Ltd
Fri	ILEA BANDS IN CONCERT London Schools Symphony Band
26 Jan	London Youth Symphony Band, Christopher Morgan (Michael Head (sopr) ILEA Music Festival Event with a spectacular finale comprising all the bands. £5. £4 £2 Inner London Education Authority
QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL	
Sat	LONDON CLASSICAL PLAYERS Roger Norrington (cond) Steven
20 Jan	Isserlis (cl) Rosalind Ov. The Barber of Seville Schumann Cello Concerto Rossini On The Italian Girl in Algiers Schubert Symphony No. 6 £15.50 £14 £13.12 £6 (ONLY) Historic Arts
7.45	
Sun	THE MAYNARD SERIES Endellion String Quartet, Domus
21 Jan	Haydn Piano Trios in E Hob.XV/28 in F sharp major Hob.XV/26 String Quartets in G Op.64 No. 4 in D Op.64 No. 5 (Lark) £8. £7. £5. £4 South Bank Centre
3.00	
Sun	THEATRE DE COMPLICITE offers an impromptu evening of fun and
21 Jan	surprise, plus a stage-hut of the techniques and devices that have brought the group its dazzling reputation £7.50. £6.50 £5.50 London Mime Festival South Bank Centre
7.45	
Mon	BÖLER POLIVKA & COMPANY working with masks, puppets, pupon
22 Jan	& every theatrical trick in the book, create "The Jester and the Queen", a contemporary comedy about the thirst for power & the battle of the sexes. £8. £7. £6 London Mime Festival South Bank Centre
7.45	
Fri	MALCOLM FRAGER The International Piano Series.
23 Jan	Haydn Son in A flat Hob XVI/45 Beethoven 22 Variations in C min. WoO 82. Sonat F. D. op. 54 Schumann Kinderszenen Op. 15 Son. 9 in G min Op. 22 £10 £8 £6.50 £4 Hansom Parrot Ltd. South Bank Centre
7.45	
Wed	THE MAYNARD SERIES Endellion, String Quartet, Graham Johnson
24 Jan	(pno) Patricia Rose, Catherine Denton, Adrian Thomas, Richard Jackson Haydn 2 String Quartets Op.64, Op.66 Farmers Lynchster Blumenkiste (13 part songs) £8 £7. £5. £4 South Bank Centre
7.45	
Thu	PIERRE SCHNEIDER Hermann Prell (piano)
25 Jan	International Lieder Masters Series Schubert Die schone Müllerin £25. £20 £10 (ONLY) Bibs & Tires Ltd. South Bank Centre
7.45	
Fri	TOM KOOPMAN (Percussion) Prog. incl. works by G. Pochi, J. P. Swellino, J. K. Keff, G. Casabianca, L. Couperin, A. Forqueray, J. Duphy, J. P. Rameau, A. L. Couperin, J. S. Bach.
26 Jan	£10. £8. £6. £5. £4 Magenta Music International
7.45	
PURCELL ROOM	
Sat	THE MOVING PICTURE MUSEUM SHOW Paul Pifou, David Gilmour, Toby Sedgwick, London premiere of new work, Generalissimo - plus
20/21	brilliantly funny mazza-theatre classic, "The Examination".
Jan	£10. £8. £6. £4 London Mime Festival South Bank Centre
8.00	
Mon	NATIONAL TRUST LECTURE SERVICE 1980 The Country Houses
22 Jan	and Country Life. Martin Drury, Historic Buildings Secretary of The
6.00	National Trust, in an illustrated lecture £4. £3.50 The National Trust
Mon	PIRE DELIBES Anne Page (sopr) Harry Stoen (ob) Maria Schmid
22 Jan	(pno) Eugenie Goossens (pianoforte) Illustrations from operas, No. 1 Poulenc Ode Souza, Janet Graham From dusk to dawn & vns by Kent Kennan, Berkeley Danseuse. £6 (concess £4) Pipe Dreams
6.00	
Thurs	MALIBU & MEDUS WITH THE STONE THIEVES Malibu create inter-arche
23 Jan	characters who seem to inhabit a world where nothing is straightforward & even a jester becomes a dangerous weapon. While Malibu means a press & full of warm humour & poetry, the show is a wonderful treat.
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Thurs	THE MONTMARTRE SISTERS IN THE PIAF European's funniest physical theatre
25-28 Jan	company which won the D' Express "Best Fringe Comedy" award at the Edinburgh Festival. Star Job provides 90 minutes of side-splitting comedy £12.50 £10.50 £8.50 £6.50 £5.50 £4.50 £4 London Mime Festival South Bank Centre
Jan	
8.00	

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Manager William Lyne MBE Box office 01 935 2141 Mailing list 14			
Saturday 20 January 7.30 pm	KATIA RICCIARELLI soprano VINCENZO SCALERA piano Song Recital Series. Songs by Faure, Liszt, Rossini, Bellini & Donizetti. Arias from operas by Handel, Cimaribini, Viviani & Piccini. ALL SEATS SOLD (return only)		HoM
Sunday 21 January 11.30 am	MAGGIE COLE harpsichord. Sunday Morning Coffee Concert . Bach: 6 2-part Inventions BWV772/86; Chromatic Fantasia & Fugue in D minor BWV903; Prelude, Fugue & Allegro in E flat BWV988; Partita in B flat BWV825 £4 including programme & coffee/sherry/juice		
Sunday 21 January NB starting time: 4 pm	JULIAN BREAM guitar Music by Bach, Giuliani, Tippett & Granados. ALL SEATS SOLD (return only)	Elizabeth Thorncroft-Smith/Harold Holt Ltd	
Monday 22 January 7.30 pm	MARY PLAZAS soprano Winner of NFMIS Eso Young Concert Artists Award Recital. DAVID LLOYD piano Debussy: Ariettes oubliées; Faure: Seven Spanish Popular Songs; Songs by Schoenberg (Cabaret Songs); Gershwin, Britten & Martin. £7, £6, £5, £4 Sponsored by Eso UK plc. Management: NFMIS/Ranger Music		
Tuesday 23 January 7.30 pm	CHILINGIRIAN STRING QUARTET . Bohemian Festival. 1st concert in Bohemian Festival Series. Haydn: Quartet in D Op.71 No. 2. Martini: Quartet No. 5 (1838); "Concerto da Camera"; Dvorak: Quartet in E flat Op. 51 "Slavonic"; £7, £6, £5, £4		HoM
Wednesday 24 January 7.30 pm	MARGARET FINGERHUT piano Bohemian Festival. Sutic: The Spring Op.22a (5 pieces, 1902); Schobert: 4 Impromptus D859; Paul Spicer: Sonata (1st perf.); Martini: 4 Marionettes; Chopin: Andante spianato & Grand Polonaise Op.22 £7, £6, £5, £4	Norman McCann International Artists Ltd	
Thursday 25 January 7.30 pm	THE CAMBRIDGE MUSIC . Early Music & Baroque Series. Robert Ehrlich recorder / Andrew Manze violin; Mark Levy viola de gamba / Richard Egarr harpsichord. 17th C. Italian instrumental music by Cima, Falconieri, Cazzati, Castello, Fontana & Martini. Early Music Network		
Friday 26 January 7.30 pm	PAULA ROBINSON flute / TIMOTHY NESTER piano. Lowell Liebermann: Sonata Op.23; Ray Harris: Lyric Study (c 1900); Besser: Venetians (1982) (1st London performances); Barber: Canzone; Faure: 4 Mélodies; Debussy: Syrinx; Chamhalide Concertino. £7, £6, £5, £4	Management: Jane Gray	
Saturday 27 January 7.30 pm	NASH ENSEMBLE /ANTONY PAY clarinet. 25th Anniversary Series. Hummel: Septet Op.114 "Military"; Dvorak: Bagatelles Op.47 (string & harmonium); Brahms: Clarinet Quartet Op.115.		
Sunday 28 January 11.30 am	CHAMBER ORCHESTRA OF EUROPE WIND SOLOISTS. Sunday Morning Coffee Concert. Kromzter: Octet-Parts in F Op.57; Dvorak: Serenade in D minor Op.44 £4 including programme & coffee/sherry/juice		
Sunday 28 January NB: starting time: 4 pm	ANDRE DINEV piano Soviet Master Pianists. Sokol: 2 Sonatas; Schubert: 3 Klavierstücke D946, 36 Original Dances D365; Schubert/Liszt: Du bist der Ruh. Du Atze. Préludes; Sonata No. 6 Op.82; Massalitin: Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jesus Nos 11 & 10; Itbs & Tales; Solridge Hotel		
Monday 29 January 7.30 pm	IRAN LLEWELYN-JONES piano. Faure: Thème et Variations Op.73; Ravel: Gaspard de la Nuit; Debussy: Estampes (1903); Messiaen: La Basse de l'Enfant Jesus; Je de feu 1 & 2; Poulen: Napoli. £7, £6, £5		
Tuesday 30 January 7.30 pm	SUK TRIO . Bohemian Festival. Janet Stulz violin; Josephine Moore cello; Josef Hale piano. Sutic: Etudes Op.23; Dvorak: Piano Trio in F minor Op.85; Smetana: Trio in G minor Op.15. £8, £7, £6, £5	Classical Music Club	HoM
Wednesday 31 January 7.30 pm	SARAH WALKER mezzo soprano. GRAHAM JOHNSON piano. Song Recital Series. Schubert: Birthday Concert. Schubert: Winterreise D811; A Songmakers Almanac Recital. £8 (All others sold)	Mgt: Ron Goncalves	
Thursday February 7.30 pm	THE CONSORT OF MUSICKE . Early Music & Baroque Series. E. Kirby, E. Tubbs, M. Nichols, A. King, P. Agnew, A. Birring, A. Rooney (lute, director). The Genius of Claudio Monteverdi. "Prima e Seconda Pratica" Madrigals, Duets & Tres. £12, £9, £6, £3		
Friday February	JOSEF SUK violin JOSEF HALA piano Bohemian Festival. Dvorak: Violin Sonata in F Op.57 Janacek: Sonata (1914, rev. 1921);		

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Tonight 21 Jan 7.30pm	TONIGHT	LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Michael Tison Thomas cond. Maurice Murphy trumpet Christine Pendill cor solo Andrew Manze clarinet Mozart: Symphony No 35 Haffner Copland: Quiet City Bernstein: Prelude, Fugue and Riffs Prokofiev: <i>Symphony No 5</i> £20 £18.50 £13 £10.50 £7.50 £4.50	LSO Ltd		
Mon 22 Jan 7.45pm	MON	LONDON SCHOOL OF SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Christopher Werner-Green cond. Lorraine McAlpin violin Allegri: String Quartet Wagner: Ov. <i>Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg</i> Bruch: Violin Concerto No 1 Elgar: Introduction and Allegro for String Preludes: Scenes from Romeo and Juliet £7 £5 £3			
Tues 23 Jan 7.45pm	TUES	BACH-WEISS IN B MINOR English Chamber Orchestra, Tallis Chamber Choir, Jeffrey Tate cond. Margaret Marshall, Kathleen Kuhmossa, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, David Wilson-Johnson £15 £13 £11 £9 £6.50	English Chamber Orchestra & Music Society		
Thurs 25 Jan 7.45pm	THURS	LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Michael Tison Thomas cond. Barbara Hendricks sopr. Strauss: Don Juan Mozart: At. Id poki! K272 Strauss: Wagners: Stasja, Liebe-Mutter-Freundin Vision: Ich will'n in Straussland binden; Monolog: Den Lied entfang Strauss: Also sprach Zarathustra £20 £18.50 £13 £10.50 £7.50 £4.50	SPONSORED BY NIKON UK LIMITED AS PART OF THE NIKON 10TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT SERIES £5 £3		
Fri 26 Jan 7.45pm	FRI	ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Brian Wright cond. Murray McLachlan piano Rossini: Ov. <i>The Barber of Seville</i> Handel: Water Music Suite Grieg: Piano Concerto Beethoven: Symphony No 5 £16.50 £14.50 £12.50 £10 £7.50 Grieg/Gubaidulina			
Sat 27 Jan 7.45pm	SAT	JACK BRYANT 75TH BIRTHDAY CONCERT London Symphony Orchestra Gabriel String Quartet Jack Bryton Carter Roy Carter and Hugh Syme horn Martin Gethin bassoon Mozart: Ov. <i>The Marriage of Figaro</i> ; Clarinet Concerto, K622; Clarinet Quintet, K581; Sinfonia Concertante for oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon. 49 RETURNS ONLY SPONSORED BY SHELL AS PART OF THE SHELL UK CONCERT SERIES £5 £3	LSO Ltd		
Sun 28 Jan 7.30pm	SUN	LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Michael Tison Thomas cond. Alexander Baranowsky violin Krausen: Choral Preludes; Violin Concerto No 1 Berlioz: Symphonie fantastique £20 £18.50 £13 £10.50 £7.50 £4.50	LSO Ltd		
Mon 29 Jan 7.15pm	MON	METROPOLITAN POLICE ANNUAL CONCERT Metropolitan Police Band and Male Voice Choir Lt. Col. Duncan R. Best cond. Mike Reid guest artist £6.50 £5.50 £4.50 £2	Metropolitan Police Athletic Association		
Fri 2 Feb 7.45pm	FRI	CITY OF LONDON SINFONIA Richard Hickox cond. Repressed Oleg violin Dvorak: Serenade Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto Grieg: Two Elegiac Melodies Tchaikovsky: Serenade for String £15 £12.50 £10 £7.50 £5 £2.50	SPONSORED BY JOHN LAING CONSTRUCTION LTD		

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Mozart.....	Eine kleine Nachtmusik
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TONIGHT at 7.45

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 GREENSLEEVES.....VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
 PIANO CONCERTO NO.2.....RACHMANINOV
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 FINLANDIA.....SIBELIUS
 PEER GYNT SUITE NO.1.....GRIEG
 POLOVTSIAN DANCES.....BORODIN

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* * *

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IN SOME REVIEWS MAY BE REPRINTED FROM YESTERDAY'S LATER EDITIONS

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TELEVISION
 Sheridan Morley

Something amazing and appalling has happened to BBC Television's arts programme policy: it is essentially that there no longer appears to be one. Consider what happened last night. *Arena*, supposedly the Corporation's flagship arts show, and the natural successor to *Monitor* and *OnePlus* returned to BBC 2 for the new season at the end of a week which has seen the *dancers* dispute at Covent Garden, the Royal Shakespeare Company announcing a likely £2 million deficit, the arrival of Stephen Sondheim as Oxford's first visiting professor of theatre, preparations for the first staging of *A Clockwork Orange* at the Barbican, the continuing crisis of Britain's museums, the opening of a major London music festival and the sudden collapse of the Peggy Lee issue.

Any or all of that might be a fit subject for an arts programme last night. Not a bit of it. *Arena* gave itself over instead to a meandering indulgence on the nature of numismatics, with Janet Street-Porter musing on the why *Network 7* was not called *Network 6* while waiters in London hotels supplied China cats to avoid there being 13 at table.

This random anthology of thoughts about numbers might have been all right in its own vaguer way if somewhere else in the output the BBC was showing any sign of an awareness of what is happening day by day in the arts. But apart from *The Late Show* on the frontier fringes of avant-garde culture, and Barry Norman's long-lasting, admirable weekly guide to the current cinema, the BBC would seem to have renounced all attempts to reflect the performing arts in this country, leaving the field clear to *The South Bank Show*, *Signs* and *01 For London*, all of which have given ITV and Channel 4 superiority in the field.

Talking of *Channel 4*, the *Soviet Spring* season continued with the start of a two-part documentary (to be concluded tonight at 8 pm but seemingly only in London and Yorkshire, for unfathomable networking reasons) on the relationship between art and anxiety in the Soviet Union and the United States.

The Scottish film-makers Murray and Barbara Gruber have seen strong similarities in the architecture of Stalin's Moscow and Roosevelt's Washington, and though their interviews do not pursue the parallels as far as they might, the two films add up to one of the best contributions yet to a season that is turning into a major breakthrough in our understanding of the Soviet Union's immediate and distant past.

As many as 20 first violins, H.C. Robbins Landon's copious programme notes told us, may have been used for the first performances of Haydn's *The Seasons* in Vienna. At the beginning of the piece one wished that John Eliot Gardiner had taken advantage of that precedent, for here the wind players put their string colleagues in the shade as far as balance was concerned, though things improved.

And why did Gardiner place the solo singers near the back of the orchestra? Distance helped none of them communicate the spirit of their roles.

The soprano, Brigitte Pischner, sounded particularly remote from the work, almost reluctant to dare to put colour into her contributions. A pity, for one senses in her firm, bright voice the potential for

Top theatre designer Stefanos Lazaridis has turned to opera direction, opening with some bold Bartók. Hilary Finch reports

Slinking into the light and dark

MIKE WILKINSON



Stefanos Lazaridis: exploring the idea of the quest for self through lucid and cohesive chains of images

When I was arguing with Stefanos Lazaridis some six years ago about his designs for English National Opera's *Rusalka* and *Ondine*, his conundrum was "do you leave the piece to speak for itself through the music, or do you go under the skin, under the metaphor?"

Since working with David Pountney (*Midsummer Marriage*, *Lady Macbeth*) and Lyubimov (*Fidelio*, *Tristan*, *The Possessed*), Lazaridis has pursued still further his near-obsessive desire to reach the very nerve-centre of an opera through a lucid and cohesive chain of images. He has now turned to direction: next week, Scottish Opera will unveil his new production of Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, presented in a double-bill with Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*.

Brought up in Ethiopia until he was 18, with no theatre at all, Lazaridis set his sights on being a film director. In England, he was based by the Central School of Speech and Drama; he looked for hands-on work, and found it in the company of designers.

Since then he has been one of the most sought-after designers in both opera and theatre, and has won several awards. "But in the back of my mind — for the last 10 years I would say — I felt directing was what my whole system wanted. I had firm offers to direct. But I still resisted. I was a coward. How do you start a career in your mid-forties?"

"No! In fact the reverse was true. I went at once for the dramaturgical aspects of the opera, reading about Bartók and deciding what it all meant for me. This is a very personal interpretation. I actually had great difficulty coming up with a design that would serve the direction. I even thought, at one point, of engaging another designer."

Lazaridis may have to move only two people about, but he has on his hands, in Kodály's words, "a musical volcano that erupts for 60 minutes of compressed tragedy,

and leaves us with only one desire: to hear it again." How did he begin to find a way in?

The presence of *Oedipus Rex* was a stimulus. "They're both examinations of marriage. And they are both thrillers. There are Biblical hints, too, which excite the imagination. Think of Judith and Holofernes: Judith as Eve, or as Lot's wife. It's curiosity about not being allowed to look? Or is it that something can be seen provided the other person can allow you to see it? Do you persevere, or

wait till the right moment? Bartók's Judith can't find that moment. She digs further into his soul, into areas that must, for the time being, be left alone."

Isn't Lazaridis taking a male-dominated view of the legend; falling into the same trap as Bartók's commentator Serge Moreux who claims that the moral of it all is that a woman in a man's life must be discreet, so as not to violate the hidden pieces of the masculine self?

"I could have focused on the theme of man as loner, as the great

Ego that must be fed. But I'm more interested in trying to find a way of co-existing, physically and spiritually, the man with the woman — or, within oneself, the *animus* and the *anima*. No harmony can be reached without a certain amount of compromise, be it with yourself or with someone else. In the opera, though, Bluebeard is there: Adam. He lives within the world of the subconscious. And Judith is the instrument which arrives in order for the cathartic process to happen."

Now Lazaridis's zigzag of suspended walkways being constructed above the dark, mottled space were beginning to make sense. I was cautious enough to ask whether the doors were all going to be on different levels? "What are doors? There is a pathway from heaven down into Bluebeard's pit. There is the possibility of light. And light is spirit. Judith can be almost a Christ figure. She arrives to cleanse; but does she arrive of her own volition? Or does Bluebeard bring her? That is the question."

I remarked, rather more cautiously, on the four-poster bed and the table and chair. "Yes. They are both areas where one consumes, are they not? And they will be used for that purpose. The violence on that stage is phenomenal."

Small wonder that Lazaridis is now turning down more work than he is accepting. Not for him an epic *Semiramide* at Nice or a starry *Barber* at the Met. "I want to continue along this vein, exploring the idea of the human being, the quest for the self, and the agony of finding a way in which to co-exist with one's fellow beings." He is designing David Pountney's new *Macbeth* for ENO, and there is the possibility of his directing a *Salomé* in Berne. Plenty of scope for the *animus* and *anima* there.

The double-bill of Bluebeard's Castle and Oedipus Rex opens at the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, next Wednesday.

Unseasonal winds

CONCERTS
 Stephen Pettitt

The Seasons

Barbican

As many as 20 first violins, H.C. Robbins Landon's copious programme notes told us, may have been used for the first performances of Haydn's *The Seasons* in Vienna. At the beginning of the piece one wished that John Eliot Gardiner had taken advantage of that precedent, for here the wind players put their string colleagues in the shade as far as balance was concerned, though things improved.

And why did Gardiner place the solo singers near the back of the orchestra? Distance helped none of them communicate the spirit of their roles.

Sounds particularly remote from the work, almost reluctant to dare to put colour into her contributions. A pity, for one senses in her firm, bright voice the potential for

an unusually radiant Hanne. Fortunately Lukas and Simon (the tenor Anthony Rolfe Johnson and the marvellous young bass, Gerald Finley) managed to span the physical gap better, though without ever quite achieving the immediacy that their standing in the traditional position front of stage would have encouraged.

Yet more serious was the apparent loftiness of Gardiner's general approach, at least in the first two seasons "Spring", for all the outward resplendence of the Monteverdi Choir's singing, which was to be as sturdy as ever throughout the evening, showed no real, inner joy, while the warmth of "Summer" lay on its surface, not at its heart. There were impressive individual moments: the sudden transformation in "Summer" from Hanne's motionless recitative to the violent, sum chorus was one; another was the long crescendo earlier in the same section which

marks the rising of the sun.

Moreover the level of the English Baroque Soloists' technical accomplishment was high throughout, but that could not compensate for the vital lack of real, human sparkle in Gardiner's interpretation, for all the detailed work he had obviously put into phrasing and such things. Was he here too conscious of the greatness of the piece?

As a dramatic unity, and as a reflection of the work's dual spiritual and worldly nature, "Autumn" was infinitely better. Here Gardiner seemed suddenly to lose his self-consciousness, surrendering himself and the whole company, including four splendid horn players, to the traditional rustic pleasures.

Not that there could be any complaints about the players assembled on stage. The main work of the evening was a seven-part suite, offering rameau to most of the 19 players.

The shackles loosened, "Winter", with its weaving song and Simon's grave moralizing aria, had the right atmosphere of cosy rumination, definitively leaving the cold outside.

Jazz

Clive Davis

Kenny Wheeler

Queen Elizabeth Hall

An almost tangible glow of goodwill hung about this opening date of Kenny Wheeler's 60th birthday tour. Few musicians arouse as much affection — and protective — as the Canadian-born trumpeter. If the big band charts composed for this Arts Council tour fell well below Wheeler's usual standards, the South Bank audience seemed more than willing to forgive him.

Not that there could be any complaints about the players assembled on stage. The main work of the evening was a seven-part suite, offering rameau to most of the 19 players.

The last time Wheeler performed with a big band in London was with Orchestra UK, an all-star group whose debut concert promised more than it delivered. Then, as now, one of the biggest

A mass of happiness

JAZZ

Clive Davis

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GARDENING

Many rare varieties of the not-so-humble potato are under threat of extinction, Francesca Greenoak reports

When the chips are down

Such are the peculiar ebbs and flows of the cultural tide that the potato, respected as the food of the gods in the pre-Inca Chavin civilization in Peru, is usually referred to in Britain as a "humble" food. It is, in fact, nutritious and easy to grow. It transferred well from the Andes to Europe, though intensive cultivation has only been practised here during the past two centuries. Like the rose, the cultivated potato has so long been associated with humanity that its precise origins are obscured by thousands of years of selection and cross-breeding.

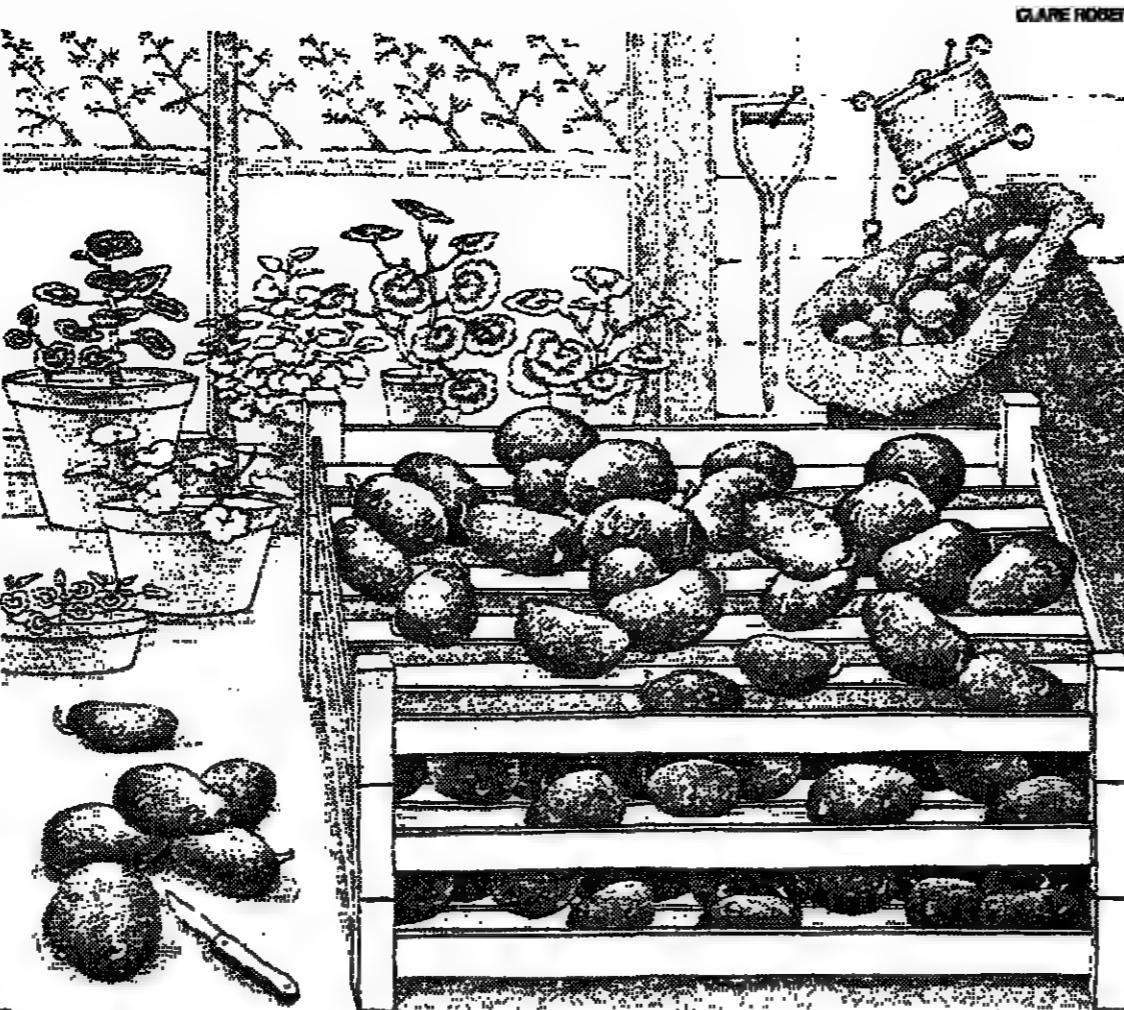
In January we sort our seed potatoes into trays to sprout or investigate the potato bins in the garden centres to see what kinds are on offer, so this is a good time for *The Good Potato Guide* to appear. Written by Lawrence Hills, the tireless defender of a wider choice in vegetables and founder of the Henry Doubleday Research Association, it gives a potted history of the potato, nutritional analysis, and a note of warning on its future prospects. Half the book is taken up with a detailed directory of the potatoe still available to the gardening public (a number of them are under threat of extinction), together with the names and addresses of the suppliers.

All of the 84 different cultivars are described, and resistance or susceptibility to disease noted. (Don't be put off by the disease lists: it doesn't follow that a susceptible variety will fail, only that it should be avoided if local soil is known to be infected.)

The book also explains how some good cultivars have already become extinct, although in 1973 there was a successful gardeners' uprising. Government regulations which would have made illegal several kinds of potato (including the much-loved, floury Duke of York) were dropped in the face of public outcry.

The Good Potato Guide pays tribute to the potato expert Don Maclean, who started conventional visitors to the Royal Horticultural Show in 1979 with a splendid exhibit of 367 potato cultivars, for which he received a gold medal. Many gardeners benefited from this collection, which enabled us to grow some of the most interesting and unusual kinds of potato, including the rare and delicious Purple Congo. This variety has an indigo-black skin and floury, purple flesh.

It is becoming more difficult to buy unusual varieties, principally



CLARE ROBERTS

GROWING POTATOES

During January seed potatoes should be "chitted", that is, placed on a seed tray in a light, airy, frost-free place so that they can begin to sprout. The general rule is to allow between three and five sprouts to grow if a heavy crop of small to medium-sized potatoes is desired, only one or two if you require large baking potatoes (although this practice varies with different varieties which may be more suited to one particular use).

The seed potatoes should be planted when the soil begins to warm, usually about April in southern parts, rather later in the north (if grass is growing well, the soil is ready for potatoes). Earlies can be planted rather closer together than main-crop varieties, and people working in fertile deep beds can afford to plant more deeply but fairly close. There is also a method of growing potatoes on the surface without digging, which entails covering the crop to keep sunlight from reaching the tubers and turning them green.

Apart from the early and main crop, there is an array of designations from first earlies through to late main-crop which allow you to get a succession and to plan your growing according to your requirements.

Remember, potato shoots are vulnerable to frost, so cover them with straw or newspaper if foliage is showing and ground frosts forecast.

WEEKEND TIPS

- Sow geranium seeds in a propagator at a temperature of 60-65°F/15-20°C. When the seedlings are large enough to pick out into seed trays, reduce temperature to 55°F/13°C.
- Make a plan for vegetables to be grown this year, and time ground where brassicas are to grow, and measure for crops such as peas, beans and onions.
- Begin to re-pot house and greenhouse plants which are pot-bound.
- Prune large-flowered clematis hybrids (viticella and Jackmanii types), wisteria and honeysuckles.
- Sow hollyhocks, larkspur, delphiniums and verbascums in the greenhouse to have plants which will flower later this year.

The reasons for these extremes are well understood. When mild moist air is forced to rise over mountains, condensation of water vapour occurs. This releases the water, so that when the dry air descends on the leeward side of the mountains it warms rapidly to reach temperatures that are considerably higher than on the windward side.

Föhn winds occur in many parts of the world. They are common in winter and spring on the northern flanks of the Alps and to the east of the Rockies, where they are known as the Chinook.

Here the effects are less dramatic, and the warmth and sunshine, the Föhn winds bring, can be a ray of hope during a long dark winter.

The Lancaster Canal

Stroll on along the path to the single span aqueduct carrying the canal, 35ft above the River Keer. Walk as far as you wish along this glorious waterway and then return along the tow-path to the Longlands Hotel.

Mary Welsh

WEATHER EYE

Wind of change

Mountainers and skiers tend to think that the sudden changes in the weather and high temperatures associated with the Föhn are a peculiar product of the Alps. But, in fact, this is only the best known example of a widely occurring meteorological phenomenon, as the unseasonal warmth earlier this week demonstrated. Places such as Colwyn Bay, Aberdeen and Tyneside had temperatures more typical of late spring.

In Britain the effects of mild south-westerly winds are less spectacular. Nevertheless, Snowdonia, the Pennines and the Grampians are high enough to produce marked effects. This explains why last week the warmest places in the country were in the lee of these mountains, in areas which are not normally noted for winter warmth.

In the valleys on the north side of the Alps where there are 30 to 40 Föhn-days a year, they affect all aspects of life. The combination of heat and excessive dryness, plus strong gusty winds, cause irritability and headaches, and are blamed for heart attacks, depression and suicides.

But, while the sudden thaws in spring may be bad news for local inhabitants and skiers, they are a boon to agriculture, as one day of Föhn can remove more snow than two weeks of sunshine.

Here the effects are less dramatic, and the warmth and sunshine, the Föhn winds bring, can be a ray of hope during a long dark winter.

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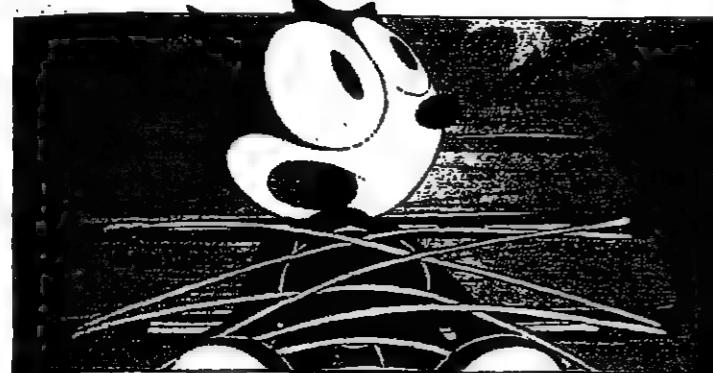
No damage

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SHOPPING

Felix claws a fortune

Following the Roger Rabbit film and merchandising success story, a 71-year-old cartoon cat is about to pounce on our hearts – and pockets – reports Nicole Swengel



Still from *Felix the Cat - The Movie*, to be released by New World Pictures

Cat's out of the bag. Felix the cat is back on the prowl. The Felix fad, which has already hit Japan, Hong Kong, Australia and the United States, seems set to take Europe by storm in 1990. This summer, a full-length Felix feature film goes on general release in Britain and, in the meantime, this chirpy, confident cartoon character is spawning a whole array of eye-catching, generally well-made merchandise.

Manufacturers say it won't be long before we will be wearing Felix T-shirts and sweatshirts, sending Felix greetings cards, writing letters on Felix stationery, carrying Felix notebooks, sporting Felix brooches, umbrellas, pens and purses, carrying Felix shoulder bags and luggage, waking up to Felix alarm clocks and checking the time on Felix watches.

Licences being issued to British manufacturers by the copyright holder's licensing agency, Determined Productions of San Francisco, include those to companies making Felix duvet covers and

pillowcases, bathroom towels, kitchen textiles, lampshades, curtains, rugs and carpets, cushions, confectionery, leisure wear, boxer shorts, savings banks, photo frames, slippers, car-muffs, keyrings, diaries and, of course, cuddly Felix toys.

Many of these manufacturers will be showing their wares at Birmingham's annual spring trade fair next month, and merchandise will be in the shops by March.

Not so it is only new Felixia which is becoming cult and collectable. Sotheby's reports that a Felix toy made in 1928 sold for £462 at auction three years ago, outstripping its guide price by more than £250.

So why has Felix survived when other cartoon characters have come and gone? Perhaps the answer lies in his irrepressible personality and feline opportunism – the sort of mental and physical agility we would all adopt if we had the chance.

Felix's curious swagger became his trademark as, with head bowed and paws clasped behind his back, he figured the best way out of each

fix he fell into. His tail doubled as a fishhook, oar, or anything else which might save him from imminent disaster, while the bag of tricks he carried turned into a hole into which he dived when the going got too tough.

Unlike Disney's characters with their simplistic motives and all-good or all-bad traits, Felix was a more rounded character.

Audiences watching the early cartoons found it easy to relate to him. And with at least three generations of enthusiasts behind him, he seems set to be one of the most enduring folk images of the century.

It was a Sydney cabbie, Pat O'Sullivan, who created Felix the Cat. Sullivan (he dropped the Irish "O") was eking out a living in Australia drawing caricatures of boxing and racing celebrities.

In 1908 he headed for London, then America, and after trying his luck as a lightweight boxer, vaudeville theatre artiste and strip cartoonist turned his hand to the

emerging art of film animation. Although Felix's origins have never been fully documented, it is generally assumed that he was created for the 1919 silent film, *Felix the Cat*.

Captivating his audiences around the time of Charlie Chaplin, and some 10 years before Mickey Mouse hit the screens, Felix embarked on a series of one-reel adventures and starred in a comic strip drawn by Sullivan's animator, Otto Messmer, which, by 1923, was being syndicated round the world in more than 70

countries. The inevitable flood of toys which followed in the wake of Felix's popularity became the lucky mascots of sports teams and jive adventurers.

When Charles Lindberg flew across the Atlantic in 1927 he had a Felix mascot with him. Aviator Ruth Elder was not so fortunate, coming down mid-ocean on her attempted crossing and, although she was rescued, her Felix mascot was lost. In a story which made headlines around the world, Sullivan cleverly sent her a cable

saying: "I am all right. Will see you soon, Felix."

As Felix became increasingly popular, Sullivan became richer, spending more time drinking and less in the studio.

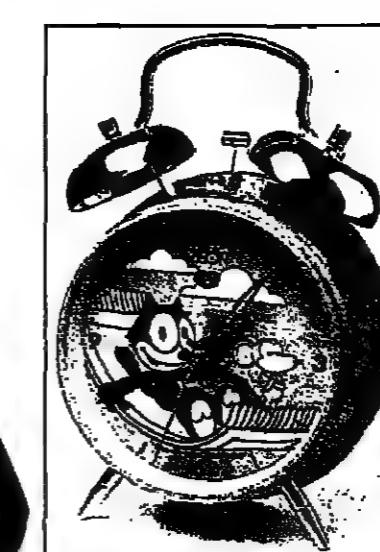
Then tragedy struck. His wife, Marjorie, fell to her death from the couple's seventh floor apartment in New York in 1932 and, within a year, Sullivan died of a combination of heavy drinking and pneumonia, aged 45.

Although Messmer continued to draw the comic strip, Felix's popularity waned in the face of Walt Disney's sound-with-colour animation. And, though the American animator Joe Oriolo revived Felix for television in the late Fifties, somehow things were never quite the same. But

Felix kept on walking... right into the Nineties, a comeback which only goes to show, if ever proof were needed, that lucky black cats – particularly famous ones – still have nine lives.



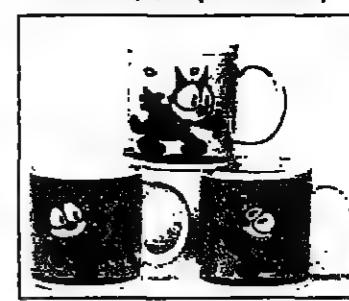
Moneybox, £10, Tokyo Boogie Beat



Alarm clock, around £29.95, and watch, around £12.95, both by Zeon (stocks 01-208 1833)



Backpack, £14.50, Tokyo Boogie Beat, 17 Shorts Gardens, WC2 (01-379 4338)



Mug, £6, Tokyo Boogie Beat



Nightshirt available in UK shops from autumn (contact Blues Clothing on 01-602 6126)



Keyring, £2.50, Tokyo Boogie Beat



Felix soft toy, £17.99, Covent Garden General Store



Metal tin, £10, Tokyo Boogie Beat



Enamel badge, £1.50 each, from the Museum of the Moving Image Shop, South Bank, London SE1 (01-923 3535)



Pencil case, £6, Tokyo Boogie Beat



Felix funny slippers, around £14.95, in UK from August (contact Downpage on 01-903 9378)

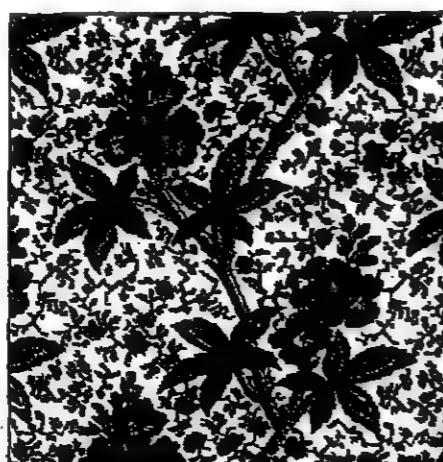


Picnic tin, £15, Tokyo Boogie Beat

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHARLES MULGAN

Design looks to the East

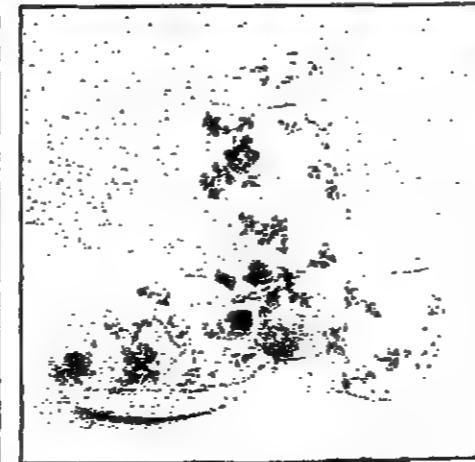
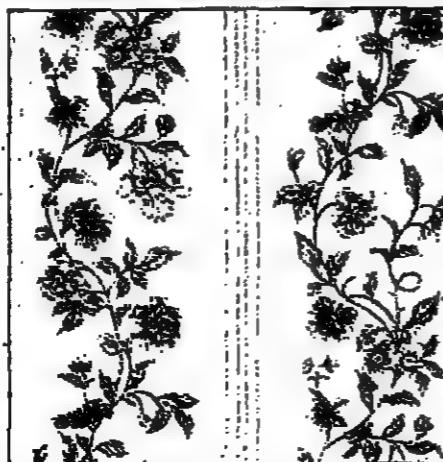
Adding spice to our long love affair with the East is a new collection of wallpapers, fabrics and tableware



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THE WEEK AHEAD

BROADCASTING

THE REMAINS OF THE DAY: The new *Book at Bedtime* is Kazuo Ishiguro's 1989 Booker Prize winner about a butler reflecting on a lifetime of service in an English stately home, read by John Moffatt. Radio 4, Mon-Fri, 10.45-11pm.

AFTER HENRY: Prunella Scales as the widow caught between a nosy mother (the splendid Joan... Sanderson) and errant daughter in a new series of Simon Brett's gentle comedy. ITV, Tues, 8.30-9pm.

PLENTY (1985): Meryl Streep, with an impeccable English accent, as a former Resistance fighter bobbed by the post-war world. First TV showing. BBC1, Fri, 9.30-11.30pm.

PHOTOGRAPHY

KURT HUTTON: One of the original *Picture Post* photojournalists of the 1930s, as much at home recording insignificant moments of British life as the big news event. His ability to capture the humour and innocence of such moments puts him on a par with the likes of Robert Doisneau. The Photographers' Gallery, Print Room, 5 and 8 Great Newport Street, London WC2 (01-831 1772), from Jan 22.

CONTEMPORARY WOMEN PHOTOGRAPHERS: Fourth annual show of women members of the Association of Photographers working within a commercial environment. Black and white and colour from fashion, advertising and editorial. The Association Gallery, 9-10 Domingo Street, London EC1 (01-608 1441), until Feb 2.

ROCK

DAVID SINCLAIR

SLIDE: Good-rocking Scottish young hopeful with a singer in the Paul Rodgers mould (Bad Company, Free). Tues, Essex University (0206 863211); Wed, Birmingham University (021 472 1841); Thurs, Salford University (061 736 5843); Polytechnic of Wales (0443 408227).

HAVANA 3AM: Ex-Clash bass player Paul Simon's new group. Something of a post-punk/Latin hybrid according to early accounts.



Ice-T: malevolent bravado with a heart of solid entrepreneurial gold

Although it has been the pedestrian Niggers With Attitude who have capitalized so neatly on the furor surrounding the Los Angeles "gangster rap" scene, it is the more sinister Ice-T who many consider to be the creator of "crime rhyme" and who now presides both as artist and *auteur* over the movement. Rap, which was invented in the Bronx, came late to the West Coast and there seems to have been a degree of over-compensation by some LA rappers to prove themselves as tough as the boys from back east. A teenage life spent on the streets of LA has steeped Ice-T in the folklore of gang violence and petty crime. "I ain't shot anybody but I know people who have" is a favourite boast, while the lyrics on his three albums abound with lurid tales of gratuitous violence, grossly detailed expressions of misogyny and complaints about infringements of his First Amendment right to speak his mind. But he has a heart of solid entrepreneurial gold, and Ice-T has steadily built up his own record company, Rhyme Syndicate (initial signings: Donald D, Divine Styler, Hijack), for which he has secured a big investment and distribution deal with Epic Records. Wed, Top Rank, Brighton (0273 732627); Thurs, Palace, Bradford (0274 724982); Fri, International 2, Manchester (061 236 2577); Jan 27, Brixton Academy, London SW7 (01-326 1022).

BRIDGE

Most rubber bridge players miss out on the excitement of duplicate, where every deal may be critical and matches may hinge on apparently trivial part-scores or on setting your opponents two tricks rather than one. But it is possible to set up a small duplicate evening without too much fuss.

One way to do it is to play a 32-board team-of-four match.

You play 16 deals, which

should take about two hours,

break to compare scores and

have a decent dinner, and then

play the second 16 deals

afterwards. I recently watched

a most dramatic final board

between Conde Nast (*Vogue*)

and National Magazine Company (*Harpers & Queen*).

Team-of-four. Game all.

Board 32. Dealer North.

♦ A 10 8 5 2

♦ A Q J 5

♦ K 3

♦ 8

♦ K Q J 10 7 6 3

♦ 2 7 6 5 4

♦ Q J 7 4

♦ 9 7 6 4

♦ Q 10 9 8

♦ K 8 3

W N E S

10 No 20

20 33 50 54

No 46 No No

North No No 50

No No No No

No No No No

had roundly vindicated his estimation of his skills.

South was prepared to let four spades go undoubled. But when West doubled, on the good principle of doubling the player, not the contract, South felt he had to rescue. If an opponent held four spades, or even five, the hand would just be too difficult for North, and South could envisage a three-trick set, or worse. When West led the spade king against five diamonds doubled, South's gizzard froze. If East was void in spades and West held the club ace, he was going to be three down at least. However, there was nothing for it but to play the ace of spades and lead a small club from dummy. East took his ace and returned a trump, won in hand. Declarer ruffed his small club, and played off all his trumps and the king of clubs. This was the four-card position with West to discard:

♦ A 10 8 5 2
♦ A Q J 5
♦ K 3
♦ 8
♦ K Q J 10 7 6 3
♦ 2 7 6 5 4
♦ Q J 7 4

♦ 9 7 6 4
♦ Q 10 9 8
♦ K 8 3

W N E S

10 No 20

20 33 50 54

No 46 No No

North No No 50

No No No No

- RUGBY UNION: 49
- TENNIS: 51
- RACING: 52, 53
- BOOK: 55

SPORT | TRAVEL & LEISURE

SATURDAY JANUARY 20 1990

Violent demonstration puts tour in doubt

From Richard Streeton
Johannesburg

Two hours before Mike Gatting's team of English cricketers had even arrived yesterday, the South African police used Alsatian dogs and tear gas to disperse about 150 anti-apartheid demonstrators outside the main building at Jan Smuts airport outside Johannesburg. This early violence of the sort that the South African cricket authorities had dreaded - and the protesters had hoped to avoid - must surely have put the future of the tour in immediate jeopardy.

Mrs Winnie Mandela, the wife of the jailed African National Congress leader, was among the protesters who arrived in buses at the airport.

First reaction from South African Cricket Union

Many carried banners, which included slogans such as "Mike Gatting the Judas Iscariot of English Cricket". As they began a march, the police herded them into an enclosed area and then, according to one police official, invoked an emergency law prohibiting demonstrations within 500 metres of an airport building.

The protesters were given one minute to disperse, but almost immediately, eye witnesses said, the tear gas sprays were fired at them and they were harassed by the dogs and hit by batons. The news of 10 arrests and several injuries quickly circulated around the airport, which swarmed with police.

Whether the English team continues its tour after such a beginning remains to be seen. If this is going to be the

(SACU) officials was that the tour would continue and they maintained this attitude as the day progressed. There is no doubt, however, that the violence has left cricket officials shaken. Even security officials suspect that something went badly wrong with how they handled the demonstration.

Immediately, several South African sports journalists waiting for the English cricket team's press conference said that the whole cause of South Africa's claims to return to international sport had been irretrievably dented. They believed cricket's attempts to become fully multi-racial had been put back several years.

"We are having on-going meetings with the police about security and this unhappy affair must be dealt with as soon as possible," he said.

pattern in coming weeks, the English cricketers themselves will presumably become sickened and will be the first to want to call a halt.

Dr Ali Bacher, SACU's managing director, and other senior officials, missed the violence because it was known that the English team's jumbo jet would be arriving three hours late. When Dr Bacher was eventually questioned, he confirmed that if SACU could establish that the demonstrators had been protesting peacefully he would lodge the strongest possible objection to the authorities about the police action.

"We have always acknowledged the right of people to demonstrate peacefully."

Dr Bacher was later asked his own feelings about the physical confrontation and with surprising frankness replied: "I anticipated it. I am not deterred nor distressed. I never anticipated that on day one Mike Gatting would walk off the plane and there would not be problems of this nature."

Twenty demonstrators finished with injuries, which included open wounds from dog bites, according to Krish Naidoo, the general secretary of the National Sports Congress (NSC), the tour's main opponent. Late last night the NSC planned to hold a post mortem about events at the airport.

Naidoo expected to get agreement for himself to seek a meeting with Gatting.

"Clearly the state and police are not prepared to let people demonstrate even peacefully. Are the English cricketers prepared to continue the tour when people are getting beaten up?"

At a crowded and brief press conference on arrival, Gatting was spared any lengthy cross-examination about his own feelings on the violence by the actions of a SACU media liaison officer. The official twice refused to allow reporters to put questions when they began with references to demonstrators being gassed and bitten by dogs. The English cricketers listened impatiently, though the players looked tired and tense after

their overnight flight, which had been delayed by bomb scares.

Asked about the demonstration and the violence, Gatting replied: "We were not here at the time so obviously I cannot say very much. I understand that people could demonstrate peacefully and obviously I would be unhappy if it was peaceful and it was still dispersed."

Gatting was then asked if the tour was worthwhile and if its future should be reconsidered. He said: "I hope there won't be any violence."

The cricketers quickly left for their hotel, which had been switched overnight, ostensibly because it was better, but it is also more easily protected than the original, which could also have been a factor.



Norman is cleared after inquiry into pay claims

By John Goodbody

Steve Ovett did receive a telephone call offering him unsanctioned money to run against Sebastian Coe over 1,500 metres in the 1989 Commonwealth Games trials, but the investigators are not satisfied that Andy Norman, the promotions officer of British athletics, made the call.

That is the conclusion of the two-man independent inquiry set up by the Amateur Athletic Association (AAA) into the controversy in Birmingham last August, when the former Olympic 800 metres champion broke down in tears while being interviewed on television.

Ovett has alleged that Norman had phoned him the previous Tuesday when he was hesitating whether to run against his great rival and said that there was £40,000 in it for the two athletes to meet for the first time on a British track. Norman has always denied making the call.

The 60-page report gives a fascinating picture of the workings of top-class British athletics and could be a best seller if it were sold. It concludes: "We are unable to establish the identity of the person who made the telephone call. While the most probable candidate for the maker of the call must be Andy Norman, we are not satisfied that it must have been made by him as it enables us to make a firm finding to that effect."

Tony Ward, the spokesman for British Athletics, said yesterday: "It is a Hercule Poirot novel without the denouement. Poirot and Miss Marple combined would have had

difficulty in solving this one."

He stressed that Norman, who was Ovett's best man at his wedding but subsequently became estranged from the former world record-holder, "retains the full support and confidence of the AAA," adding that although many people have helped in the 1980s, Andy "was the architect who brought Britain to the forefront of the sport."

Ward termed the result of the inquiry, conducted by David Pickup, the director general of the Sports Council, and Robert Reid QC as a "0-0 draw." Both investigators declined to comment further yesterday on their findings.

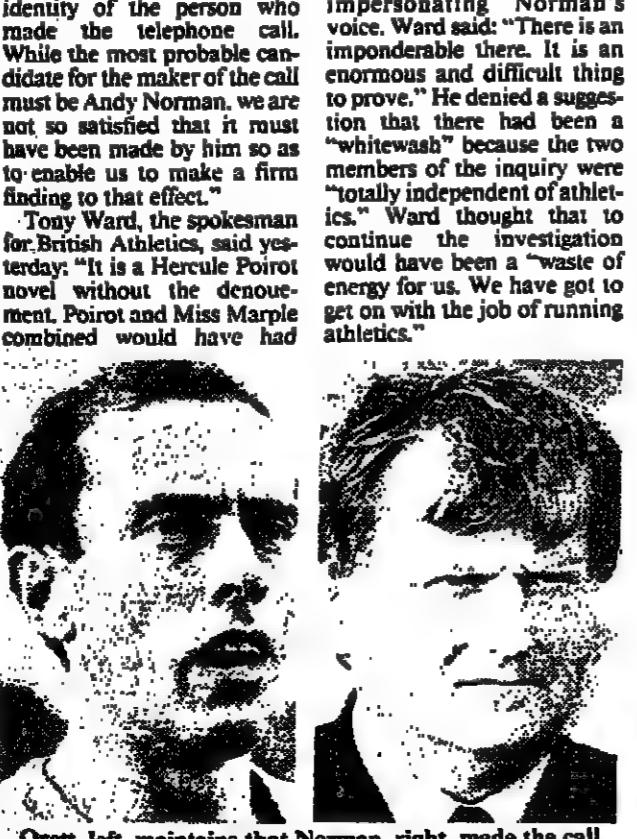
With meticulous work the pair examined records of phone calls and interviewed 36 people before reaching their conclusion. They include some of the biggest names in the sport as they attempted to reach a definite conclusion as to whether Ovett either before or after a press conference on August 8.

Several theories have been considered by the investigators, including the possibility of a hoax caller impersonating Norman's voice. Ward said: "There is an imponderable there. It is an enormous and difficult thing to prove." He denied a suggestion that there had been a "whitewash" because the two members of the inquiry were "totally independent of athletics." Ward thought that to continue the investigation would have been a "waste of energy for us. We have got to get on with the job of running athletics."

The report points out to the AAA that the terms under which Norman had been engaged by the Association, and the style of operation adopted by him in the past and apparently condoned by the AAA, had led to an understandable ambiguity as to how far Norman reasonably believed that "his powers of discretion could be stretched."

"I'm pleased the inquiry admits I was telling the truth when I said I had been offered money," Ovett said yesterday. "It does not confirm who made the telephone call with the offer of money, but I know who phoned me - it was Andy Norman."

Norman, who was in Australia, could not be reached for comment yesterday.



Ovett, left, maintains that Norman, right, made the call

Portland victims decide to retire

By George Rae

Paul Cook and Ian Johnson, two of the jockeys involved in the Portland Handicap pile-up at Doncaster last September, are to retire. Both cite injuries received during the race as the reason for terminating their riding careers.

Cook, who rode the faller, Madraco, fractured a foot, ribs and collar-bone, while Johnson, who was brought down by Pendor Dancer, injured his back. Neither has ridden since.

The jockeys yesterday issued statements through their solicitor, Matthew McCloy. "My riding career has been brought to a premature end as a result of the accident in the Portland Handicap last year," Cook said.

Johnson, who throughout his career has been dogged by injury, said: "I have been advised by my doctors that I must give up riding as a result of the injuries received in the Portland. It is a matter of great regret to me and I shall

180 begin Monte Carlo rally

Monte Carlo (AP) - The 58th Monte Carlo rally opened yesterday with 180 drivers from five starting points around Europe converging on the tiny Riviera principality. The favourites include Massimo Biasion, of Italy, winner of the rally, and Ari Vatanen, of Finland, in a Mitsubishi, who won the Paris to Dakar rally this week.

The competitors began from Sestriere, Italy; Lausanne, Switzerland; Barcelona, Spain; Reims, France; and Bad Homburg, West Germany.

The race begins in earnest tomorrow, in front of the Casino of Monte Carlo.

The rally covers more than 2,000 kilometres (1,200 miles). It ends with an all-night drive to the Thursday morning finish at the Casino.

Weather on the French Riviera has been sunny, with temperatures about 18°C (mid-60s). No snow is forecast.

Jockey Club report, Page 52

Scotland B aim to extend fine record

By Alan Lorimer

After setting a splendid record during the 1980s, when they won seven of their matches Scotland meet France again tomorrow, and appropriately it will take place at the venue of the first meeting in 1971, in Oyonnax in the French Juras.

For Richie Dixon, the Scottish coach, this will be his fourth match in overall charge of the B side, but he has assisted the Scotland senior coach, Ian McClelland, seven times and played against the French at B level in three matches, captaining the side on each occasion as a flanker.

Neither team has much in common with the two sides who met at Melrose last season, when Scotland won 14-12. Scotland, however, have only three players from the Greenvilles encounter. Edwards at centre and the two locks, Richardson and Munro.

France have only one survivor, the lock Cadieu, from the Toulouse club.

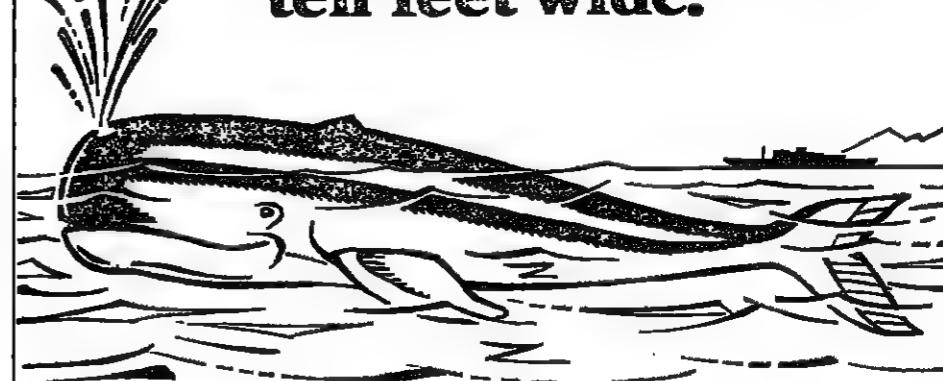
Simon Barnes's Sporting Diary, Page 10

Scotland will undoubtedly be looking for a much greater share of lineout ball from Munro and MacDonald than they achieved against Ireland last month and will be looking to improve their defence with Rouse at centre. If Scotland do manage to move the ball wide then interest will focus on Porter, the wing, who must be a strong candidate for the left wing on the senior side.

FRANCE B: J Bousc (Toulon), A Horne (Biarritz), P Tramont (Toulon), J-P Lescure (Toulouse), G Lescure (Toulouse), G Althaus (Agen), J Heyer (Montfermeil), P Munro (Biarritz), M Capdeville (Toulouse), G Munro (Toulouse), J Cadieu (Toulouse), M Lhermet (Toulouse), E Gerville (Toulon), A Gagnon (Toulouse).

SCOTLAND B: D Sennett (West of Scotland), A Morrison (Edinburgh Academicals), P Ross (Dundee High School FP), B Edwards (Boroughmuir), S Porter (Montrose), G Brae (Edinburgh Academicals), D Sykes (Edinburgh Academicals), G Green (Sering County), I Corcoran (Glasgow), G Wilson (Edinburgh Academicals), S Munro (Glasgow Academicals), A Macdonald (Camden Town), D Busby (Glasgow High School).

In Canada, the locals have smiles ten feet wide.



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A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Simon Barnes's Sporting Diary, Page 10

Air Canada

AIR CANADA

FOOTBALL: ASTON VILLA CONTINUE TO PROSPER UNDER TAYLOR AS COWANS KICKS HIS ITALIAN HABIT INTO RETREAT

The benefits of forward thinking

By Clive White

Gordon Cowans admits that the sight of the durable Jimmy Case, who he faces this afternoon at Villa Park, is a source of inspiration to him. But he also knows that much of the credit for his own extended career is due to one man — Graham Taylor.

It is not without coincidence that the transformation of Aston Villa from relegation strugglers to championship contenders in six months reflects the change in the midfield performance of the frail but gifted Cowans.

In September Taylor suspected that, at 31, Cowans's distinguished career might be over at the highest level. "I wondered whether he had reached a stage of his career where he didn't want the heat of the battle. He was playing so deep that he was in danger of playing behind the back four," Taylor said.

Players can tell you something about a change in their thinking without them realizing it. I really did wonder that, whether having brought him back from Italy and after a season in which he had done very well, he might be just telling me that he didn't fancy the midfield confrontation any more."

The result was that Taylor dropped Cowans for a spell. Cowans had found it hard to accept that he was playing any deeper than he had done in the past but after watching videos of himself playing in Villa's championship-winning side of 1981-82 he realized that Taylor was right. He blamed his unwitting retreat upon three years with Bari in the Italian league.

Cowans was restored to the side and began playing 15 yards further upfield, where he was in a better position to give support to his forwards and in a less perilous position to the team should he lose possession. The improvement in Cowans's form, quite apart from that of Villa, has been such that he is again being

talked about in terms of an England player.

Yet there has been little or no corruption of Cowans's principles about how the game should be played. While, to the less enlightened, the marriage of Taylor's beliefs in football to those of a purist like Cowans may have seemed an unlikely one, in fact the two men share much the same views.

"I had no qualms about coming back from Italy to play for him. Everyone has got this thing about Graham Taylor and the long ball at Waford, but he was just playing to his strengths. Villa may have played that way to get out of the second division but now we have got players who can play as we used to play to our strengths. We are playing some good stuff."

"He is an even better manager than I first thought. Tactically, he is very shrewd. He will change the team depending on who we are playing, even if we might have won the week before and played well. He is a nice man but at the same time you know where you stand with him. You wouldn't like to cross him."

Taylor's admiration of Cowans's qualities as a footballer is just as generous. He said that he paid £250,000 for Cowans on the basis of just three fruitless passes he saw him make in one game in 1981. "I could picture us getting someone on the end of them," he said.

Not least is his appreciation

of Cowans's passing ability,

surely on a par with that of Hoddle. So sweetly does Cowans strike a ball that Taylor believed that he could turn his back upon half a dozen Villa players and ask them to hit a ball 30 yards and he would be able to tell, just from the sound, which ball had been struck by Cowans.

The sole survivor of the championship-winning side, Cowans does not believe that the present Villa team are as good, "but we're well on the way to being so." He said: "There are some qualities that are common to both teams. The '81-'82 team was very strong in defence and so is this one. We had a winger in Morley who had two excellent feet, was very quick and could create goals and score a few. Daley is just the same only quicker."

The old Villa team probably worked harder than any other side around at the time and the current one is hard



Passing thoughts: Cowans's ability in midfield allows him the chance to think of a return to Italy with England this summer

working, too. When you have that and ability it makes you very hard to beat. We are starting to get that feeling where we believe that we can win any game, home or away.

I could see the potential of players, like Platt and Daley, as soon as I arrived from Italy. There is still more to come and if the manager can add to the squad it is going to be a good side for a few years to come."

Cowans and his teammates are only too aware that they

could not have a better opportunity of surpassing Liverpool than this season, with the Merseysiders dropping points so freely. "We just need to hang in there and then just hope that we can handle the pressure when it comes near the end of the season."

As for his personal ambitions, Cowans has not given up hope of winning his 10th cap this summer in the World Cup finals in Italy, where his knowledge of playing conditions and continental styles

could be invaluable. He admitted, though, that his omission from the training group announced this week by Bobby Robson did not sugar well.

"I am as fit as I was when I was 22 and see situations a little bit earlier now because of my experience. I believe I have enough ability to be in the England team. Look at Case, he is playing brilliantly at 35. I look at him and think, 'if he is still doing it, why shouldn't I?'"

GOLF

Lyle finds himself a mountain to climb in the desert

From Patricia Davies, Palm Springs

As the Americans might say, it was time to make a move time for Sandy Lyle in the third round of the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic. After level par rounds of 72 at Bermuda Dunes and Tamarisk, he was in joint 10th place (out of 128 professionals), a whisking 11 shots behind the leaders, Dave Stockton, Peter Jacobsen and John Cook.

Yesterday, Lyle was due to play at Indian Wells, the easiest of the Classic courses, over 300 yards shorter than any of the other three, and traditionally the place to make really low scores. The tournament record of 61, held by Bert Yancey and David Edwards, was set at Indian Wells and scores in the mid to low 60s are commonplace.

Given that Lyle was to play his fourth round on the difficult Palmer Course at PGA West today, he needed to give himself some leeway with a better-than-good third round if he wanted to make the cut in this elongated, 90-hole amateur and celebrity oriented jamboree.

For Lyle it was the tournament and the first prize of \$180,000 would probably require something approaching a miracle for, if the weather holds, 20 under par is usually good only for place money.

Jacobsen, being what he calls "an Oregon duck" and used to cold weather, did not suffer in the unseasonably chilly conditions that prevailed in the second round, and agreed that 23 strokes for the first nine holes

was a good start for the day.

He dropped two shots in the last seven holes, taking three shots at the third, his 12th, and driving behind a tree at the last, to finish with a bogey five, no good at all to him or his amateur partners.

For the last two holes the tournament and the first prize of \$180,000 would probably require something approaching a miracle for, if the weather holds, 20 under par is usually good only for place money.

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He dropped two shots in the last seven holes, taking three

shots at the third, his 12th, and driving behind a tree at the last, to finish with a bogey five, no good at all to him or his amateur partners.

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The Times previews the opening of the five nations' rugby union championship



By Gerald Davies

Back in 1902 the Welsh team contained two players, Teddy Morgan and David Jones, wing and second row respectively, who came from Aberdare. They were there for the famous victory against the All Blacks three years later, too.

But it has taken another 84 years for a couple of players together from the small town to play again for Wales. Aberdare, like neighbouring Merthyr Tydfil, is better known for its football than rugby. The two Davids, Young and Evans, hail from there.

While Young will form part of the hidden balaust of the scrum, Evans emerges, from a possible choice of six, and after three caps in the centre, to inherit the dashing mantle of the stand-off half. Evans is now the fifth in a year to

occupy what all Wales considers the most illustrious, almost hallowed, certainly the most argued over, position in the Welsh team.

The responsibility, however, rests easily on Evans's shoulders, and with a degree from University College, Swansea, in the science of management, he could be said, apart from his practical qualification, to be also academically qualified for the position.

"I am happier when I am able to manage things on the field. I like to be in control," he says. "I don't mind where I play for Wales, if I had to choose it would be at stand-off half. I like calling the shots."

Although born in Wootton Bassett, where his father was a teacher, his family had, within a year, gone to live in Aberdare. He attended a comprehensive school in a town

where he first played in the position.

"The No. 10 jersey was given to me then and, I suppose, like all children, whatever first jersey you're given is the one you want to stick with after that. At any rate, it's the one in which I feel natural, easy and confident."

He was the Welsh schools' stand-off half in 1984 when they lost to the English team captained by Will Carling. However, Evans scored 16 points in the 20-0 victory against France. Inside him during that season was his partner on Saturday, Robert Jones. But they had played together before that in a curtain-raiser seven-a-side tournament in 1981 before the John Player Cup final at Twickenham. They have not been coupled together since.

After Swansea, Evans went

up to Oxford University for a year. He retains his contacts there and was pleased earlier this week to learn that his friend, Mark Egan, had been chosen captain next season.

No one mentor sticks out as a major influence on his rugby. "I've had lots of advice," he says. "And have taken little bits from here and there. But then I've made up my own mind. I was a great admirer of Gareth Davies at Cardiff. He was a marvellous tactician and a beautiful kicker of the ball. But then I also enjoy the instinctive footballing abilities of Mark Ring. He is good to play with. He has this marvellous way of making time for himself on the field. I enjoy kicking the ball, it's part of the game, but I prefer running with it."

Ring and Evans have already shown for Cardiff a telepathic rapport. A back pass here, a flip, finger-tip pass there, with each responding to the other's whims. Evans, along with his centre, understands how with such play they can so often skate on very thin ice. Neither would have it any other way.

To talk to Evans is to talk to an enthusiast. He is an optimist of which kind, when it comes to rugby, there are so very few on the ground in Wales. He is a smile to boot which is yet another blessing in these days of the sportsman's stern and furrowed look.

Both half backs seem so tender-aged and clean

scrubbed, they might just be in the school choir on the way to evesong, which will be in such contrast to the grunted features of the French pack bearing down on them. Many a mother's heart is sure to

flutter at the sight. Evans's high-pitched voice and frequent chuckle seems to confirm this air of boyish mischief. He has, for all that, the true competitor's instinct.

When that other brace of Aberdarians played, they beat the All Blacks. That honour has swiftly gone by the board for the pleasant pair whose first appearance together that was. But in 1902 and 1905 they were there again to win the triple crown. It would be quite a trick for the new stand-off half to achieve that at the start of a new decade. France is the first hurdle.

"There is a confidence in the Welsh team," he said. "I'm not going to concern myself with problems that the French are likely to pose to us. I'd rather concentrate on the problems we are going to pose to them."

ADRIAN BROOKS



Young: hidden ballast

England attempt to bury the past and build for the future

By David Hands
Rugby Correspondent

A glance at the list of five nations' championship winners over the last 20 years, which is tabulated on this page, is an indication of the perils awaiting those who prophesy a bright future for England. One outright win, and a share in the quintuple season of 1973, adds up to nothing more than a fierce argument that the country's natural resource — overwhelming playing strength — has been wasted.

For many seasons, representatives of the other home countries — Finlay Calder, last summer's British Isles captain, was the latest last month — have argued that, if England ever get their act together, they have the capacity to beat anyone in the world.

Changes in the domestic playing structure and team management made over the last three years may not yet amount to the necessary volte-face, but it has helped increase the efficiency of the players. Efficiency is not necessarily the most attractive of qualities but, if it produces the successes which, all too often, have slipped through English fingers, a long-suffering public will be happy.

This afternoon's Save and Prosper international against Ireland at Twickenham should prove an admirable stage where England can display their virtues of efficiency, of experience and — we should not, I suppose, be afraid to say so — of natural ability. Their XV comprises a powerful mixture of players blessed with talent and others who have worked to make it so.

In the back division, for instance, Underwood, Carling and Guscoth have been granted formidable gifts of pace, deceptive running and strength. Hill and Hodgkinson have worked formidable hard, to make themselves international players, by endless training to perfect the scrum half's skills or adapting from stand-off half to full back.

TODAY'S TEAMS AT TWICKENHAM

England

S D Hodgkinson	15	Full Back
R Underwood	14	Right wing
W D C Carling*	13	Right centre
J C Gaskell	12	Left centre
M D Bailey	11	Left wing
C R Andrew	10	Stand off
R J Hill	9	Scrum half
P A G Rendall	1	Prop
B C Moore	2	Hooker
P J Ackford	5	Lock
P J Winterbottom	7	Flanker
D W Egerton	8	No 8

Ireland

K Murphy	15	(Captain)
M J Cleeman	14	(Dopple)
B J Mullin	13	(Blackrock College)
D G Irwin	12	(Irishman)
K D Crossan	11	(Irishman)
P C Russell	10	(Irishman)
L F P Aherne	9	(Lansdowne)
D C Fitzgerald	1	(Lansdowne)
S J Smith	2	(Ballymena)
G F Halpin	3	(Wanderson)
P M Mathews	6	(Wanderson)
N P T Francis	4	(Blackrock College)
W A Anderson	5	(Dungannon)
P T J O'Hara	7	(Sunday's Well)
N P Mannion	8	(Carrickfergus)

Referee: P Robe (France)

REPLACEMENTS: 16 A J Dessaix (Wasps), 17 S J Halliday (Bam), 18 S J Bates (Shannon), 19 M B Llaurens (Moseley), 20 C J Oliver (Harlequins), 21 M C Togue (Gloucester)

REPLACEMENTS: 16 P Murray (Shannon), 17 B A Smith (Oxford University), 18 M T Bradley (Constitution), 19 P C Collins (London Irish), 20 N J Popplewell (Glyndebourne), 21 J P McMenamin (Malone).

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McKean's hunger spells a warning to farewell for Coe

By David Powell
Athletics Correspondent
Auckland

Tom McLean admits to being a reluctant pacemaker. This time, though, he may have given the others too much of a start. While Sebastian Coe and the Kenyans have been allowed to run on ahead in their preparations for the Commonwealth Games 800 metres, McLean's mind has been wandering.

"I said last year that my main aim for this year would be the European championships, and I have also used my build-up for the Commonwealth Games as an experiment for running indoors next year. It's a strange feeling to be running so fast in the middle of winter," he said. But, as he prepared for his first race today since his World Cup win in September, Paul Erceng — the Olympic champion's first defeat since Seoul.

There had been too much of a good thing in 1985, when McLean completed 34 successive wins, and 1986, when he won Commonwealth

titles. "I came off the World Cup on a high, took a bit of a break and picked up the training gradually from October and November," he said. By that

Auckland taxpayers pick up Games loss

Taxpayers in Auckland are to pick up a £5 million bill as part of a plan by the New Zealand government to finance a loss of £8.3 million, which has been budgeted for by the organisers of the Commonwealth Games. The bill will cover two-thirds of the loss, and the remainder will come from central government funds.

Last August, David Johnson, the former Games chairman, disclosed potential losses of £4.2 million. Then he resigned after being arrested on conspiracy charges involving a multi-million dollar fraud relating to private business affairs.

England, the favourites, and Scotland, the fourth seeds, have

and European silver. "The problem before the world championships was that he had been winning all the time," Tommy Boyle, his coach, said.

Despite three European Cup triumphs and one in the World Cup, McLean still lacks an international championship gold. But once the 800 metres begins on January 29, he will be as competitive as anyone.

Neither the Kenyans, Kiprotich or Kibet, who both ran faster than McLean last year, nor Coe, who headed the rankings, will feel comfortable with McLean at their heels as the finishing straight beckons. Renowned for his finishing speed, he feels more confident than ever with his kick. "The only difference in my training has been that I'm not doing so much of the long stuff," he said. "I was doing 1,000s and three-minute runs, which I'm not doing now, and my flat speed has improved."

The list of names which made Britain pre-eminent in world 800-metre running in the 1980s goes down as far as McLean. But, unlike the other four — Coe, Ovett, Cram and Elliott — he has remained faithful to the distance in his five years as a senior international.

Soon, he may have to sing the anthem alone. Ovett's international days appear to be over. Coe retires after the Games, Cram is considering a move up to 5,000 metres next year, and Elliott has become entrenched in the 1,500 metres.

Nothing would give McLean greater pleasure than to beat Coe, the world record-holder for 800 metres, at his last Games. "The guy has been my hero since I started running," he said. "But if I can spoil it for him, that's OK by me."



Sizing tight: Walker, the sole Isle of Man woman athlete, contemplates her 3,000 metres fate

Walker runs for memories

From David Powell

Brenda Walker is in the Isle of Man women's athletics team. At the age of 33, she has reached the Commonwealth Games in her first few months as a track runner. But, apart from that reason alone, should the island be proud of her. There are no all-weather tracks in the Isle of Man.

The trial which got her to Auckland for the 3,000 metres was hardly the Alexander Stalines with Coe, Ovett, Rosenthal et al. It was not even run over the right distance. She flew to Bromley, Kent, after persuading the timekeepers of a 5,000 metres race to clock her at 3,000 metres. The trouble she took was worth it: she scraped into the 9min 35sec qualifying time by 1.2sec.

Now, Walker may need to find another 30sec to avoid finishing last in her heat on the opening day of athletics next Saturday. "I'm terrified about this race. The next slowest woman has run 9:02," Walker said.

But, so the big day is not spoilt, she is going to get the hang of finishing last. She has got her name down for a 1,500 metres Games warm-up race today, and steps on to the track against Liz McCollum, Yvonne Murray and nine other women capable of 4:15 or better. "I think my best is about 4:40," she said.

As she spoke in the athletes' canteen, Sebastian Cox walked by. "Isn't that Coe? I've just seen Coe," she said, drawing breath deep enough to have got her around a lap. They probably say much the same about Brenda Walker on the Isle

of Man. "There's not another Manx woman who has ever got under 10 minutes for 3,000 metres," Walker said.

At the time of the last Commonwealth Games, in Edinburgh, Walker had just started running in response to a scare that she had breast cancer. "I just needed something to focus on," she said. After three years on the road, she tried the track. Who wouldn't, given free flights to Britain by a local airline?

Walker would have done no better to have chosen swimming or shooting to focus on. "The runners have not got an all-weather track, the swimmers have not got a competition-sized pool, and the shooters have got a 50-metre range," she said. But at least they have got their Commonwealth Games T-shirts and memories.

Squads boosted as艺术 makes a Games comeback

By Peter Aykroyd

With arts as an official Commonwealth Games sport for the first time since 1978, all four home countries have been able to obtain grant aid to send the gymnasts to Auckland.

In 1982, the Commonwealth Gymnastics Federation (CGF) was founded to stage a competition for member countries alongside the Games when the sport was not included officially. CGF events are not eligible for full grant aid, and in 1982, in Brisbane, and in 1986, in Falkirk, the national associations of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland had to restrict the numbers of their participants.

Even with grant aid available

The Commonwealth Games begin in Auckland, New Zealand, on Thursday. The Times is previewing each of the 10 medal sports. Today: gymnastics

national champion, shared with Lisa Elliott, of England. Elliott is again in the English team, hoping to make the floor medal all her own.

However, Canadian confidence was shaken at the world championships in Stuttgart last October when the British men overtook them in the team competition. Three of those triumphant Britons are representing Britain in Auckland and could dislodge their rivals again. They are James May, the national champion, Terry Bartlett and Neil Thomas. David Cox, the British reserve at Stuttgart, is the fourth.

The Welshmen could reach medal status with experienced performers such as Andrew Morris, the former British champion, and David Griffiths. This could be at the expense of Australia, who were ranked below Canada at the world championships.

In the women's competition, Canada are likely to retain their team title, with England and Australia facing a close battle for the other medals. All four English girls — Lisa Grayson, the British champion, Lisa Elliott, Lorna Mainwaring and Louise Redding — performed with distinction in Stuttgart. Wales, fourth in Falkirk, could also be a strong challenger.

On form, the individual overall artistic titles should fall to Canadians. However, May, who has been consistently showing world-class form, could upset Canadian hopes in the men's competition.

Asian cities favourites

Auckland (Reuter) — Delhi and Kuala Lumpur are the front-runners in the race to host the 1998 Commonwealth Games, a Games official said yesterday.

David Dixon, the secretary of the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF), said: "The Games have never been held in Asia and that must count in their cities' favour."

The dominant Commonwealth country in artistic gymnastics during the last decade has been Canada, who hold both team and individual titles. In 1986, Canada won all the gold medals — team and individual — except the floor gold, which Marin Covaci, the Canadian

secretary-general of the Australian Olympic Association (AOA), Randhir Singh, is planning to travel to Auckland to launch Delhi's bid, despite the

Dixon said that the Australian cities of Adelaide and Perth were also candidates for the 1998 Games. The CGF will decide the venue during the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona.

TABLE TENNIS

Prean in form at Top 12

From Richard Eaton Hanover

Car Prean made an encouraging start in his bid to climb among the game's elite when he beat Zoran Primorac, the Yugoslav No. 2, 22-20, 21-11, 21-18, in the Stag Europe Top 12 tournament here yesterday.

The secret of his success was the development of his backhand hit. Time and again Prean projected it across court with pinpoint accuracy, then with a powerful backhand that kept Primorac under pressure. Occasionally he switched it, without telegraphing it, down the line to devastating effect.

In the end, though, Prean trailed, 10-15 as the Yugoslav scored with flowing top spins, and might have gone 18-20 down had he not managed a lucky edge. But the backhand hit that got Prean to 22-20 helped turn the match.

Earlier Flura Bulatova, of the Soviet Union, the European champion, was controversially barred from the tournament. Her national association did not want her to play because she participated in the Italian Club Cup of Champions, apparently without permission, and the European Table Tennis Union accepted the authority of her country's association. Thus, a largely amateur body denied participation to a full-time professional who had reportedly travelled to the tournament at her own expense.

YACHTING

Europeans to combine in Cup challenge

By Malcolm McKeag

A new group, calling itself the European America's Cup Class Association (EACA), has been formed with the object of promoting racing within Europe for the 75-footers currently under construction in anticipation of the next America's Cup. The president is Raul Gardini, whose Italian syndicate has taken a lead in attempting to coordinate the efforts of European challengers.

Derek Clark, the design coordinator for Peter de Savary's Port Pendennis Challenge, says emphatically that the EACA, formed by Peter de Savary's Port Pendennis Challenge, says emphatically that the EACA, will not become involved in the present legal proceedings in America. The final court decision is expected in February or March, with no further legal processes left to either Mercury Bay or San Diego.

The EACA plans a regatta for America's Cup Class yachts in September — the venue to be announced by April — and hopes to create sponsorship and media interest in regattas to support the boats and their campaigns between America's Cups.

Just a 1/2 point separates the two leading boats in the Key West 50-foot World Cup which finishes in Florida with a final race today. If the worst scores are discarded, Udo Schutze's Farnham Container has 11.75 points and Masakazu Kobayashi's Tiger, also Farnham, has 11.25.

COMMONWEALTH GAMES: AS THE COUNTDOWN TO THE OFF GATHERS MOMENTUM, ONE RUNNER ADMITS NERVOUSNESS WHILE ANOTHER FEELS TOTAL TERROR

McKean's hunger spells a warning to farewell for Coe

By David Powell
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Auckland taxpayers pick up Games loss

Taxpayers in Auckland are to pick up a £5 million bill as part of a plan by the New Zealand government to finance a loss of £8.3 million, which has been budgeted for by the organisers of the Commonwealth Games. The bill will cover two-thirds of the loss, and the remainder will come from central government funds.

Last August, David Johnson, the former Games chairman, disclosed potential losses of £4.2 million. Then he resigned after being arrested on conspiracy charges involving a multi-million dollar fraud relating to private business affairs.

England, the favourites, and Scotland, the fourth seeds, have

and European silver. "The problem before the world championships was that he had been winning all the time," Tommy Boyle, his coach, said.

Despite three European Cup triumphs and one in the World Cup, McLean still lacks an international championship gold. But once the 800 metres begins on January 29, he will be as competitive as anyone.

Neither the Kenyans, Kiprotich or Kibet, who both ran faster than McLean last year, nor Coe, who headed the rankings, will feel comfortable with McLean at their heels as the finishing straight beckons. Renowned for his finishing speed, he feels more confident than ever with his kick. "The only difference in my training has been that I'm not doing so much of the long stuff," he said. "I was doing 1,000s and three-minute runs, which I'm not doing now, and my flat speed has improved."

The list of names which made Britain pre-eminent in world 800-metre running in the 1980s goes down as far as McLean. But, unlike the other four — Coe, Ovett, Cram and Elliott — he has remained faithful to the distance in his five years as a senior international.

Soon, he may have to sing the anthem alone. Ovett's international days appear to be over. Coe retires after the Games, Cram is considering a move up to 5,000 metres next year, and Elliott has become entrenched in the 1,500 metres.

Nothing would give McLean greater pleasure than to beat Coe, the world record-holder for 800 metres, at his last Games. "The guy has been my hero since I started running," he said. "But if I can spoil it for him, that's OK by me."



Sizing tight: Walker, the sole Isle of Man woman athlete, contemplates her 3,000 metres fate

Walker runs for memories

From David Powell

Brenda Walker is in the Isle of Man women's athletics team. At the age of 33, she has reached the Commonwealth Games in her first few months as a track runner. But, apart from that reason alone, should the island be proud of her. There are no all-weather tracks in the Isle of Man.

The trial which got her to Auckland for the 3,000 metres was hardly the Alexander Stalines with Coe, Ovett, Rosenthal et al. It was not even run over the right distance. She flew to Bromley, Kent, after persuading the timekeepers of a 5,000 metres race to clock her at 3,000 metres. The trouble she took was worth it: she scraped into the 9min 35sec qualifying time by 1.2sec.

Now, Walker may need to find another 30sec to avoid finishing last in her heat on the opening day of athletics next Saturday. "I'm terrified about this race. The next slowest woman has run 9:02," Walker said.

But, so the big day is not spoilt, she is going to get the hang of finishing last. She has got her name down for a 1,500 metres Games warm-up race today, and steps on to the track against Liz McCollum, Yvonne Murray and nine other women capable of 4:15 or better. "I think my best is about 4:40," she said.

As she spoke in the athletes' canteen, Sebastian Cox walked by. "Isn't that Coe? I've just seen Coe," she said, drawing breath deep enough to have got her around a lap. They probably say much the same about Brenda Walker on the Isle

of Man. "There's not another Manx woman who has ever got under 10 minutes for 3,000 metres," Walker said.

At the time of the last Commonwealth Games, in Edinburgh, Walker had just started running in response to a scare that she had breast cancer. "I just needed something to focus on," she said. After three years on the road, she tried the track. Who wouldn't, given free flights to Britain by a local airline?

Walker would have done no better to have chosen swimming or shooting to focus on. "The runners have not got an all-weather track, the swimmers have not got a competition-sized pool, and the shooters have got a 50-metre range," she said.

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Michael Seely meets Toby Balding, the extrovert trainer and company director never far from the headlines

Chief of a high-powered tribe

PETER TREVOR

There is no keeping Toby Balding out of the news. His powerful string, led by the champion hurdler Beech Road, is the envy of many of his colleagues; he is joint managing director of British Thoroughbred Racing and Breeding plc (BTRB), the first company formed in Britain to raise public money for ownership; and this week he has been linked with a move from Fyfield in Hampshire to Peter Bolton's multi-million pound complex in Dorset.

Both parties are at present non-committal, but there is no doubt that negotiations are underway. On a recent visit to Fyfield, Balding discussed the matter. "I am the servant of a public company," he said, "so there would be a lot to be sorted out."

"However, the benefits of a move would be twofold. We're a bit strapped for facilities here since the new A303 virtually cut off the old Weyhill gallops. We're virtually confined to an all-weather strip on 40 acres, and although there would be a lot to be done at Whitcombe there's 1,000 acres to play with."

Two years ago BTRB bought Fyfield from Balding, and the trainer is now a salaried employee of the company. "If we moved BTRB would be able to sell Fyfield, freeing cash for our main business, which is racing thoroughbreds."

Top-class horses are the breath of life to any leading stable and this season Fyfield is particularly rich in the hurdling department. Beech Road is 5-2 favourite to retain his crown at Cheltenham in March; a convincing win by Morely Street in the Agfa Hurdle at Sandown on February 3 would see one of last season's novices join his stable companion in the championship line up; and were the National Hunt Festival were to take place today Forest Sun would start a short price favourite for the Sun Alliance Hurdle.

The 50-1 victory of Beech Road at Cheltenham last March was one of the shock results of the season. But the then seven-year-old's emphatic confirmation of that form at Aintree, not only proved the earlier result to be no fluke, it also triggered an amazing treble for Fyfield, continued by Little Polven in

Balding, an extrovert six foot two inches in height and weighing around 15 stone, is a mass of physical and nervous energy and shares the family's love of sport. "I'm a bad but cunning tennis player. I did quite well at rugger, but didn't have the same chances as Ian. I was working for my father when he was sent to Millfield to be crammed for university. The headmaster, Jack Myers, was a brilliant educationalist but something of an opportunist. He made Ian head boy on the day he arrived and sent him racing four days later, just to make sure he didn't miss out on any tips."

The 28 years that Balding has been at Fyfield have seen some famous triumphs including that of Highland Wedding, who gave the trainer his first National win in 1969. Green Ruby, in the Stewards' Cup and Ayr Gold Cup has possibly given the stable its most noteworthy wins on the Flat.

But sport on the level has always proved a fruitful source of winners for the versatile Balding. Despite the concentration of heavy spending power in Arab hands making buying horses for the Flat more difficult, he dislikes being labelled as a national



Paws for thought: Toby Balding enlists the help of border terrier Mrs McTavish as he studies entries for forthcoming races

hunt specialist. "I think we've already proved that if you give us the tools, we can do the job."

Balding has never been short of talented jockeys. Currently Jimmy Frost is No 1, with Richard Guest as back up.

"We brought Jimmy in initially as cover for Richard. Jimmy's a horseman through and through from a West Country hunting and point-to-point background, whereas Richard, who began life riding for Michael Stoute, is a jockey above everything."

"He comes from the famous family of Charlie, Joe and Nelson Guest, and all he needs is some mileage on the clock for when Jimmy decides to go training as I think he will."

The stable tour completed, Balding dashed off to London to have dinner with some owners. He was to spend the night, look at some horses in Kent and not return until the following afternoon. "The chief is going away so I'm

leaving my Indians to look after you."

Serena, his eldest daughter, is some Indian by any standards. Having finished her London business career by headhunting candidates for jobs worth £45,000 a year or upwards, she must find the secretarial work and the 100 other jobs child's play.

Jonathan Gaskin, the new assistant trainer, is the son of Beech Road's owner and that morning rode the champion in his work on the all-weather gallop. "He's got so much stronger and relaxed. He's got a definite mind of his own. But I suppose that's what makes him a champion."

The Land Rover party to the work grounds included Bud Sayers, the head lad with 35 years' service with Balding, and five very assorted dogs: Weenie, a 12-year-old cross between a cairn and a fox terrier, is monarch of all he surveys. "He even likes going to the start of the gallops to

make sure they all jump off," Miss Balding said.

Two years ago the rambling house, together with the rest of the property, was sold to BTRB and the family moved elsewhere in the village. Now it doubles as both company and training headquarters.

Trevor Bishop, joint managing director, explained the set up. "We took Toby over lock, stock and barrel. We pay him a salary and the whole business is run by the company. When we bought Fyfield, we borrowed the money at low interest rates but it's become much more expensive. That's one of the reasons why it would help to sell Fyfield."

BTRB was the first to cash in on the 0898 telephone numbers and hotlines. "It just about keeps us afloat," said Bishop. "Together with the Richard Pitman form guide and the club line, we offer 39 services."

The accounts for 1988 show the hotlines contributing a to the start of the gallops to profit of some £75,000 to BTRB.

Being one of the first into its field, BTRB is still in a strong position. And unlike some of its competitors, it makes no pretence of guaranteeing a profit. "As far as we are concerned it's about making it possible to own racehorses comparatively cheaply."

"It's all about involvement. They all get a lot of pleasure and excitement out of coming here for stable visits and to watch work. When Bishop's Yarn won the Glen International Gold Cup a couple of years ago, there were 150 owners in the unsaddling enclosure at Cheltenham. He won the Peter Maresca Chase at Haydock last season, and if the going is soft on Saturday, he will go close again."

Such enthusiasm is infectious. Whatever the eventual bottom line in a difficult business life will always be fun around Toby Balding, the exuberant captain of a go-

ing team.

He is a critical weakness in the existing system. Firth was made available to them the stewards had no reason to abandon racing after the fall of Madracio.

"Throughout the first day, even after the Portland Handicap pile-up, the stewards were unaware of the drainage work carried out just weeks previously."

"On information that was made available to them the stewards had no reason to abandon racing after the fall of Madracio," the report says.

"They cannot be faulted in their decision to continue."

Only a conversation the following morning between Patrick Hibbert-Foy, a steward's secretary, and a groundsmen, who recalled some drainage work done early in August brought to light the possible extent of the problem.

Concern grew as the fact became apparent, until the fall of Able Player brought the crisis to a head. The St Leger was postponed and won the following Saturday at Ayr.

The report is also particularly critical of the management structure at Doncaster. The council, having authorized the work, took little further interest, although in its reply the council claims that constant reference back and forth could only slow implementation.

The racecourse executive should take a more direct and positive interest in this aspect of a racecourse's affairs," the report says.

Reservations are also expressed about the roles of the general manager, Don Cox, and Firth. "Sharing the control between a full-time general manager and retained clerk of the course who lives some distance away is liable to lead to some confusion over their respective functions and duties, and lack of proper supervision of work on the racecourse."

However, on the cause of Madracio's injury, a fractured off-hind fetlock, the report states: "It has been impossible for us to reach any firm conclusion as to the cause of this fracture. We are not convinced that the horse's rear leg penetrated a drain."

Legal action is still threatened by the connections of Madracio.

• The Racecourse Association has not yet studied the report but is likely to make a statement in due course.

New maintenance regulations in wake of Doncaster

By George Rae

The Jockey Club is to introduce new regulations governing racecourse maintenance in the wake of the loss of the Doncaster St Leger meeting last year.

The three-man committee appointed to investigate the abandonment, Lord Chelsea, Miles Gosling and Sandy Struthers, recommends a framework within which racecourse officials must maintain closer contact with the Jockey Club.

The problems encountered at Doncaster are blamed primarily on drainage work carried out during July and August, which left underground cavities. Stones around the drains settled, while the clay soil hardened and shrank in the exceptionally dry summer, creating a space. The top surface could then be punched through.

The report concludes: "On September 13, 14 and 15, 1989, Doncaster racecourse was unfit for racing. That was not, however, apparent from any visual inspection... nor was it known before September 15 by any executive of the racecourse, official or steward."

The fall of Madracio in the Portland Handicap on the opening day, Wednesday 13, bringing down Pendor Dancer and Tolo, was the first dramatic indication that something was amiss. Although racing continued that day, as did the following day, the fall of Able Player on the Friday evening event on the Friday

compelled the stewards to abandon the meeting.

Neither Paul Cook or Ian Johnson, the jockeys of Madracio and Pendor Dancer respectively, have ridden since. Ray Colclough on Tolo, broke a collar-bone but has since returned to action. Billy Newnes, on Able Player, was unharmed.

In charting the events of the meeting, and describing the events which preceded it, the 20-page report catalogues a near-total lack of communication between parties interested in the drainage work, compounded by the absence of a defined code for track maintenance.

The work part of a long-running programme to redress the effect of the drain in the straight, was undertaken by Pat Firth, the clerk of the course, with the permission of Doncaster Borough Council, which owns and runs the racecourse.

However, Firth, in his evidence to the committee, admitted the specifications were his own, which had been used previously at Doncaster and other courses. No professional advice was taken, nor was the Jockey Club inspectorate of courses consulted. Even the council, despite authorizing payment for the work, did not know exactly when it would begin.

Here is a critical weakness in the existing system. Firth was under no obligation to report his work to the Jockey Club, nor to submit notice that the work would commence and by whom it would be done.

There was no breach of the Rules of Racing because instructions relating to track work did not exist. The actions of individuals in what drew perilously close to a tragedy of error can be viewed only in the perspective of a thoroughly imperfect system.

Even so, elements of the report suggest at times alarmingly amateurish approaches. According to the report, Firth's "entrenched scepticism of experts" led him preferring his own tried and trusted methods, despite one consultant considering them 20 years out of date, and the efficacy of the improvements were determined by "prodding or poking about" with a walking stick.

However, the council, in its reply, is happy that Firth's remarks were simply colloquial, and that a thorough investigation had taken place. But the lack of plans of the drainage system is beyond dispute. The

The principal proposals

• Responsibility for the condition of the racecourse should rest primarily with the racecourse executive.

• The Jockey Club inspector of courses must be informed by the clerk of the course at least six weeks before work commences, except in emergency.

• The inspector can prohibit such works unless a clerk takes advice from a Jockey Club-approved contractor.

• The clerk must inform the stewards of works having taken place since the last meeting.

• Inspectors should be instructed in turf husbandry and drainage.

• Plans of drainage must be kept at the racecourse.

drains were signified only by a mark on "permanent" running rails, which had since been replaced. To have located the drains precisely would have required excavations of treasure hunt proportions.

Perhaps more serious is the lack of liaison which dogged decision-making during the meeting. "The stewards were surprised, when making important decisions, by being denied information that should have been made available to them," the report says.

It adds: "Mr Firth told us it never entered his head to inform the Doncaster stewards before racing about the work which had been done on the course in July and August because he did not see any problems arising."

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Kami King success rewards owner

Irish-based owner Mrs Miles Valentine set eyes on Kami King for the first time at Towcester yesterday, and then won the 1000 Guineas at the Shot Gun Novice Hurdle.

Although displaced as favourite by late money for Favoski, it was Kami King who proved the stronger. Beaten 10 lengths by Madracio in the front in the first two all the way, sent him ahead approaching the home turn then held off Favoski by 3½ lengths despite blundering at the last.

Trainer Charlie Brooks, who had obviously given Mrs Valentine the right sort of encouragement, said: "We were very hopeful."

"Kami King is still only a baby and this was only his fourth race of any sort. He ran just once on the Flat in France for Alain De Royer-Dupre, but he's quite all right. I'm bringing You See You then to the course tomorrow to have a look around and to have a good workout after racing. He won't jump any hurdles. It's all part of his preparation for the Agfa Hurdle at Sandown on February 3."

This will be You See You's third racecourse gallop as the trainer struggles to restore the champion hurdler to his peak after an absence from the racecourse of nearly two years.

In the opening Hanworth Conditional Jockeys' Handicap, Jamie Raiston, one of the season's leading young riders, was once again seen to great advantage when riding Weirpool to a four-length win over Mount Oliver at Towcester.

Michael Robinson, the winning trainer, was at Towcester, but was represented by his fiancee, Caroline Beasley, who was the first woman to ride a winner at the National Hunt Festival in Ellington.

After three consecutive seconds in a row, two of them as the champion hurdler to his peak after an absence from the racecourse of nearly two years.

Ambuscadero, making his racecourse debut, beat Highflyer by two lengths to take the Maifly Novice Hurdle. Trained by George Moore, Ambuscadero tracked a cannon-bone following his 9,000 guineas purchase at the Newmarket October Sales. As a youngster the son of Roberto was placed in the Chesham Stakes at Royal Ascot.

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Golf Correspondent Mitchell Platts marks a turning point in the life of the greatest player the game has seen

An American legend changes course

Jack Nicklaus, the chubby youngster with the unbecoming crew cut who shed his fat-boy image to become the Golden Bear all America loves, is 50 years old tomorrow.

He has repelled one young pretender after another during a noble career but now the days of parrying the thrusts of Tom Weiskopf, Johnny Miller, Tom Watson and Severiano Ballesteros are all but over. Next weekend he will be reminded of how it all began as once again he strides the fairways with Arnold Palmer, Gary Player and Lee Trevino, in the Senior Skins tournament in Hawaii.

The difference is not so much that they are now all "seniors" but that Nicklaus does not start at something of a disadvantage, as he did in 1962, when he first won as a professional. Then he plunged into the professional pool and, not surprisingly, confronted a tidal wave of resentment because he had the temerity to challenge and conquer Palmer, the idol of the spectators. Of course, he went on to achieve so much more than that.

Nicklaus is recognized as the finest golfer in the history of the game. In 1988 he was officially named "Golfer of the Century" following a remarkable career of which the highlights are six wins in the Masters, five in the US PGA Championship, four in the US Open, three in the Open Championship and two in the US Amateur Championship.

"The Nicklaus record? You can forget anyone ever beating that," Gene Sarazen, aged 87, one of only four players to have won the four major championships that comprise the professional grand slam, said. "Nobody will ever come close to his 20 championships. It's the safest record in sports."

Sarazen was speaking at Augusta last April. He was standing on the veranda of the colonial clubhouse and as he spoke so he surveyed the scene below him. "Look at them," Sarazen said. "College-bred, smart as a whip, most of them millionaires and soon-to-be millionaires. So many that no one man among them will be able to take charge and win those big titles in clusters. This is a new era we're entering upon."

The Nicklaus era began when he turned professional late in 1961. He possessed the amateur pedigree to be hailed a future champion, but failed to look the part. Palmer was perceived by his devoted admirers to have more charisma in his little finger than Nicklaus had in the podgy figure which promoted the taunting cries of "Fat Jack."

What the tuff blue touch paper of abuse against Nicklaus was the unhappy coincidence that in 1962 he played his first US Open as a professional in the heart of Palmer country at the Oakmont Country Club, Pittsburgh.

Those who saw that championship unfold well remember how many, who hero-worshipped Palmer, reacted to Nicklaus winning what would be the first of his 18 major professional championships. "The gallery were rude, loud

JACK WILLIAM NICKLAUS
Born: Columbus, Ohio, Jan 21, 1940.
Married: Barbara Bask, five children.
Turned professional: 1961.
Career details: US Amateur champion 1959, 1961; NCAA champion 1961; World record number of major championships – US Masters (1963, 1965, 1968, 1972, 1975, 1986); US PGA (1963, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1980); US Open (1962, 1967, 1972, 1980); Open Championship (1965, 1970, 1978); US PGA player of the year 1967, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1976.
Tour victories: 71.
Career earnings: \$5,005,825.

and offensive," Mark McCormack recalls. "Until 1962 yelling 'miss it' when a golfer was trying to hole a putt was unheard of. You heard it at Oakmont. Most of the remarks were directed against Nicklaus. They cheered when he hit it into a bunker, they coaxed his ball into rough and if they could have found a way to throw his clubs onto the Pennsylvania Turnpike they probably would have. The gallery on the last day was certainly among the most ill-behaved ever."

Nicklaus faced a problem of personality more than an examination of his ability. He was fat. He did not hitch-up his pants and give the ball a rip like Palmer. His iceberg-blue eyes were mean and gave not the hint of emotion. He was indeed, borrowing a line from Hemley, "the master of his fate, the captain of his soul."

McCormack had cajoled Nicklaus into turning his back on a \$24,000-a-year job in the insurance business with the promise that he would make a minimum of \$100,000 in his first season. Victory in the US Open meant that McCormack's predicted figure represented nothing more than small change.

Of that turning professional did not leave its scars. Nicklaus, the son of a pharmacist, has one regret.

When the amateur University informed him that he would need to drop out of college. "He said he didn't want a registered student being publicized as playing all over the world," Nicklaus said. "It was a decision I disagreed with and fought bitterly. It's the only thing in my life that I've ever started and didn't finish."

Most certainly Nicklaus has met head-on and won every challenge he has confronted during his illustrious career, supported every inch of the way by Barbara Bask who, like Nicklaus, was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio. They met during their freshman year at Ohio State and married three years later, when both were only 20.

"I told Jack from the start, even though he was so hurt by the reaction to his US Open win in 1962, that he was so honest and straightforward that some day he would work it out," Barbara Nicklaus said. "I knew he could concentrate on something and shut out all extraneous thoughts like no one I'd ever known."



Favourite of the gallery: Jack Nicklaus, acknowledging the crowd at St Andrews, is far removed from the intense, unsuiling player he once was

"In fact, I called him 'Stonewall'. If he was watching television, and was especially interested by a programme, then the house could burn down around him and he wouldn't notice," Nicklaus, however, could be arrogant and, at times, abrasive, which helped when it came to winning championships, but did little to win the admiration of the spectators.

Yet despite his air of Teutonic stoicism and his unrelenting search for perfection, there was a more sensitive side to Nicklaus that craved acceptance as a human being as well a great golfer.

The majesty of his game would, of course, eventually help him achieve his aims, although Nicklaus would be the first to pay tribute to Jack Grout, the teacher with whom he worked from the age of 10. Grout died last May, so for Nicklaus there was a poignant start to this year. "My first action each New Year was to track down Jack and greet him with the same old line: 'OK, Jack, let's go. Teach me all over again.'

This philosophy – that a full review of the fundamentals was always necessary, even when he was playing the greatest golf of his life – provides evidence enough that Nicklaus never lost sight of the need to overhaul his swing.

What best illustrates his tunnel vision, apart from being able to take a course like Augusta and rip it to shreds, is the way he changed his appearance in 1969. He lost almost two stones in weight in five weeks and reduced his hip measurement by no less than eight inches. He

grew his hair and the era of the Golden Bear truly dawned. By then he had won seven major championships and he came to Britain in 1970 with his new look and won the Open at St Andrews.

It was there, at the home of golf, that Nicklaus buried the image of being an unwanted predator in Palmer's domain. The act of removing his sweater prior to becoming the first known player to drive through the green at the 18th, as he beat Doug Sanders in the play-off, marks the moment of change. The way he greeted success by leaping in the air and hurling his putter skywards gave a lie to the theory that he lacked emotion.

Nicklaus was now 30. He was unquestionably the best golfer in the world, and yet his best was yet to come. He had begun the 1970s having not won a major championship since the US Open in 1967. He won another seven majors in the next 10 years and yet he approached the 1980s as he had the 1970s, with speculation rife about his future. He had failed to win in 1979. Now he considered what lay ahead as he unwrapped the birthday present from his children: a T-shirt on which was inscribed "Jack Nicklaus is 40".

It was then that Nicklaus was man enough to accept that the cornerstone of his game – power – was a thing of the past. He modified his swing to make allowances for *anno Domini* and he won the US Open in 1980. Afterwards, at Baltusrol, there was no stopping Nicklaus as he sat talking for three

hours. "I should probably retire now, but I haven't got the sense," he mused.

Two months later he had won the US PGA title. Three years later, at Augusta, he was rendered helpless by a severe muscle spasm across the lumber region. He lay in agony for hours in the locker room. Back trouble has plagued Nicklaus throughout his life and X-rays have shown a degeneration of the discs in his lower spine.

Yet, back at Augusta in 1986, Nicklaus had cause to reflect on whether instant retirement was an option once again. He had played the inward half in 30 strokes, which tied the record, on his way to a final round of 65 as he won his sixth Masters, which earned him probably the most emotional reception of his life.

It was an astonishing win for many reasons, not least of which was that he had long since elected not to make playing the most important thing in his life.

"I get a big kick and a lot of pleasure out of designing courses," he said. He also gets a lot of money. The basic charge for a Nicklaus design ranges from \$1 million in the United States to \$2 million in Japan. In Britain his first venture was St Mellion, in Cornwall, and he is presently involved in a new course for Gleneagles. What one might suspect would concern Nicklaus, and yet does not, is the thought that, unlike his playing record, his courses could be digested by others.

"People will come along and tamper with them," he said. "They are doing that already; they've been fooling around with Shoal Creek, where the US PGA is being played in August. That's all right – I can't do everything perfect. I make mistakes. Sometimes I get carried away."

Now, at the start of the 1990s, Nicklaus has a new target. "I want to win a tournament on each Tour – the regular and the Seniors," he said. "It's the first goal I've set myself in 10 years. The Seniors Tour is growing bigger and bigger, to the sponsors and to the public to keep playing as long as I can. I see it as my duty."

Nicklaus, of course, owes the game not a ten cent.

It is the game that he has so enriched which should be indebted to him. Barbara Nicklaus sums it up succinctly. "I simply cannot imagine Jack Nicklaus not playing golf. It is what he does, has always done, better than anything in the world."



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ROWING

ARA seeks guiding hands for future

By a Special Correspondent

The executive officers of the Amateur Rowing Association will be holding interviews today for the new posts to organize the international rowing scene as the sport moves into the 1990s.

Following the international selection problems of last summer, a special council meeting in October decided to do away with the post of director of international rowing, held by Penny Chuter, and to set up two new roles of responsibility, a performance director and an international rowing manager.

The performance director is the head of the new arrangement and, as was stated in October, this post is "top of the line management system" and will oversee the selection process. The international rowing manager's tasks will be more logistical in nature and in many ways the splitting of the two responsibilities is something that Chuter advocated. There will also be an appeals panel, as in the past, hopefully composed of three members who have considerable experience of international rowing.

Di Ellis, chairman of the executive committee, is not prepared to reveal the candidates for the posts, although it is already known that Chuter will be among those in contention for performance director, together with "someone from overseas". An announcement of the executive officers' decision is expected some time next week.

CYCLING

Runner-up position beckons

By a Special Correspondent

Britain's Andy Layte and John Pemberton had both hoped to finish second in the European Junior Challenge cyclo-cross series, but only Pemberton can do anything about it in the final race at Nantes, in France, tomorrow.

Layne, of Kenilworth Wheelers, qualified as a junior last year in the first three rounds and holds second place overall. But now he is a senior and stays at home, while Britain's amateur teams selected for the World Championships in Spain on February 3-4 have their final chance to meet their likely opposition.

Pemberton, of Chesterfield Cycles, is still a junior and is third in the European Challenge.

If he can get in the first five at Nantes, he will beat Layte to second place, with Jerome Chiari, of France, unbeaten as he won the first three events.

Richard Thackray, of Bradford Olympic, and Chris Perry, of Chesterfield, support Pemberton on their first international outing.

Steve Barnes, of Ace RT, whose silver medal in the recent open national championships split three professionals, is the man on form for Britain.

GYMNASICS

New era dawns in Romania

By Peter Akyroyd

Following the revolution in Romania, the country's gymnasts will be able to compete freely in all important events this year, according to Maria Simeonescu, the distinguished Romanian international judge, who is vice-president of the world technical committee of the Federation Internationale de Gymnastique, the world governing body.

The Japanese sponsors are Shimano, who happily admit to making probably the most expensive fishing tackle in the world. Their head man in the United Kingdom is a Welshman, John Loftus, who says: "What I'm pleased about is that we were able to agree in principle to back the Welsh team before they won the world title."

Now, everything has changed. Speaking from Bucharest, Simeonescu said: "Things are going to be so much better. Training at our national centre

is now continuing as normal."

She thanked friends in international gymnastics for their support through difficult times, and was optimistic that a Romania team would take part in the Championships at Birmingham in March.

Romanian gymnasts will definitely compete in the European Championships, scheduled for Lausanne (men) and Athens (women) in May, when they will resume their traditional rivalry with the Soviet Union.

Simeonescu, known universally as Mili, was coach to the Romanian women's team at the Melbourne, Rome and Tokyo Olympic Games. After becoming administrative head of women's gymnastics, she persuaded the government to establish a specialized high school for the sport, on the lines of similar schools already founded for the arts. The school, in Onesti, was

where Comaneci was trained to dominate world gymnastics in the 1970s.

Up to now, gymnastic talent in Romania has been nurtured in much the same way as in the rest of Eastern Europe. Elite gymnasts – they can be picked out at the age of six – reach the national squads through the country's sports schools and, of course, success in competition.

Training at this level has been under strict bureaucratic control – one of the factors which led to Comaneci, in her role as national junior women's coach, making her decision to defect. It is understood that her repeated request for changes were ignored.

The new era in Romanian gymnastics will allow a more relaxed approach to national training. But the aim remains the same – to maintain Romania's position as a world leader.

Luxembourg

European Law Report

Date stamps on eggs unlawful

and did not include the date of laying; it was, however, permissible to indicate the period or date of packaging.

Without disputing the facts alleged against him, Mr Paris challenged the validity of article 15 of Regulation No 2772/75 on the basis that it was contrary to the fundamental right of consumers to information and for the Treaty of Rome.

The Tribunal de Police (Local Court, Ardenne, France) stayed its proceedings and referred a question on the interpretation of article 15 to the Court of Justice of the European Communities for a preliminary ruling.

In its judgment the European Court of Justice ruled as follows:

The wording of article 15 left no doubt as to the prohibition which it imposed upon operators in the egg market not to put the date of laying on eggs which they distributed; moreover, that interpretation was not disturbed either in the written decisions or at the hearing.

That regulation laid down the marketing standards for eggs which were regarded as necessary to improve their quality and to facilitate distribution, in the interest of producers, traders and consumers.

By article 15 left no doubt as to the prohibition which it imposed upon operators in the egg market not to put the date of laying on eggs which they distributed; moreover, that interpretation was not disturbed either in the written decisions or at the hearing.

It was therefore necessary to consider the question submitted to the Court as relating, in substance, to the validity of article 15.

The provision of information to consumers was one of the objectives pursued by the

regulation. According to its preamble, consumers were to have the possibility of distinguishing eggs according to different categories of quality and weight and that requirement might be satisfied by applying marks to the eggs.

It was important that the information provided to the consumer was reliable and therefore that it should be easy for the national authorities to verify.

According to the Commission it was not practicable to carry out checks at the production level, which would be essential in order to guarantee the accuracy of the date of laying, by reason of the dispersion of producers.

It was for that reason that the Commission and the Council experts were of the opinion that only the present system, which was based upon checks carried out mainly in packaging centres, which were less numerous and less dispersed than producers' establishments, made it possible to guarantee with certainty the accuracy of information provided to the consumers such as the date of laying.

Taking into account the interests of reconciling both the interests of producers and those

of consumers as well as the sometimes differing interests of different categories of producers, it did not appear that, in their overall assessment of the situation and from the nature of the measures required, that the institutions had committed manifest errors or that they had, in one way or another, exceeded the general limits of their discretionary powers.

Article 40(3)(2) of the Treaty, which prohibited any discrimination between producers or consumers in the Community, sought to ensure that competitive conditions were the same for all the operators concerned.

By establishing common standards for the distribution of eggs in the Community territory, the disputed regulation was in conformity with that objective.

TRAVEL

Taking relaxation seriously

Robin Neillands enters the charmed world of health farms and has his stress smoothed away along with the excess pounds

A man I met outside the weighing room at Raggdale Hall gave me the good news about health farms. No one who goes there is fat; perish the thought. The big reason for visiting a health farm is stress.

I went to Raggdale because I was at least a stone overweight, quite unfit, and puffing a bit on the stairs, but I soon realised that I was indeed under stress, mostly about what to wear during my stay. Should I spend the day in a dressing gown, I wondered, or fit about the treatment rooms in my newly bought tracksuit? Once I had settled for the tracksuit, which is the unisex rig-of-the-day at most health farms, I felt a whole lot better, almost stress-free, in fact.

Set in a large country house close to Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire, Raggdale Hall concentrates on relaxation, diets and individually designed fitness programmes. The food is good and so adjusted that you can eat like a horse and still not exceed 850 calories a day. With that, some exercise and a few treatments, I was melting away within hours, and my three-day stay passed quite pleasantly. I lost half a stone and left determined to try again.

Health farms vary in their approach to health and fitness, but the basic ingredients are much the same. Generally set in country houses surrounded by large grounds, they offer all the comforts of a five-star hotel, usually at a five-star price.

To the basic cost, which covers accommodation, meals, a range of treatments and free use of all the facilities, one must add the cost of any other optional treatments, some of which can be costly, exotic — and hard to resist. You

pay your money and you take your choice, but the cost of these treatments can mount alarmingly.

Health farm clients therefore tend to be well-heeled professional people, with a ratio between men and women of about 30:70 per cent. Some stick rigidly to their programmes, others are simply there to relax and enjoy themselves.

Most health farms offer the same basic package for a minimum three-day stay, although some establishments also have day courses or weekend breaks. Those who want extra treatments book them individually and, within very broad limits, the visit can be as busy as relaxed as the client wishes. That said, there are considerable variations between health farms, both in the range of facilities on offer and the approach to the serious business of relaxation.

Champneys, near Tring in Hertfordshire, was the first proper health farm, established in 1925 in a house that once belonged to the Rothschilds. Visits here, as elsewhere, begin with a consultation with the medical sister and a dietician, who weigh the guest in and provide a basic regimen for the rest of the stay. There is a full range of facilities: pool, gym, exercise room, and a vast range of treatments — including the seaweed body wrap (£25) — and advice on back pain and how to stop smoking, plus fresh-air activities including cycling, walking and horse-riding. There are two dining-rooms, one for the weak-willed on strictly controlled diets, the other for those who can resist the puddings without too much effort. There are evening talks and lectures, usually on some health-related topic. A new feature for the

coming winter is a weekend ski programme, which runs through to the middle of February. Champneys also offers day programmes, with massage and other treatments, at prices from £79.95, while rates for longer stays vary from £105 to £500 a night according to the accommodation required.

Grayshott Hall near Hindhead in Surrey offers the full range of health farm activities, plus a particular programme to cope with stress, designed for Grayshott by psychologist Dr Audrey Livingstone. This programme, price £30, takes place in the afternoon, leaving the guests free to enjoy all the other activities in the morning and evening. There is a huge indoor pool, a dance studio, physiotherapy, osteopathy and chiropody, swimming lessons, golf and tennis coaching and two dining-rooms, one for diettakers, the other for food-lovers. Neither room serves alcohol. Room rates at Grayshott vary from £75 to £100 per day. Like most health farms,

Shrublands occupies a former country house, in this case Shrublands Hall, built in 1740 on one of the highest hills in Suffolk and still surrounded by a classical English garden. The interior furnishings are on a lavish scale and the food is excellent but never cooked. Salads, raw fruit, home-made yoghurt and wholewheat bread make up the Shrubland diet. Treatments available include underwater massage, sauna, hydrotherapy and instruction on relaxation techniques. Weekly prices start at £290 for a single room and £325 for a double room.

Forest Mere, near Liphook in Hampshire, is a serious, even strict, regimen. At most health farms, the guests can take a full part in activities or drift along gently on their own, but at Forest Mere they are expected to avoid business and social ties, stay off the telephone, stop or reduce smoking, refrain from alcohol altogether and take some exercise. This sounds like my kind of place. Crash diets are not recommended.

but most guests start on the light diet to get their going under control before returning to a more normal diet before leaving. Bicycles are available for excursions into the countryside, and there are a number of good golf courses in the vicinity. Basic prices start at £515 for one week.

Ceder Falls in Somersham is a place which believes in relaxation and tranquillity — up to a point. Diets are prepared individually and then taken one day at a time, with a nutritional adviser at your breakfast table every morning to plan the intake for the day. Otherwise the emphasis here is on reducing tension, increasing fitness and getting away from the hurly-burly of daily life. There is the usual range of treatments, plus golf, fishing, riding and walking in the beautiful Quantock Hills. Ceder Falls tends to be less expensive than other health farms at prices from £54 to £115 per night for a single room, though guests are expected to stay for seven nights.

Raggdale Hall concentrates on diet and beauty, so your first appointment here is with the

dietician, and a beauty treatments office is open seven days a week, from 7.30am until 8pm. There is a sports coach on hand to arrange fitness programmes in the gym or exercise room, and smoking is strictly forbidden except in the smokers' lounge. I found this crowded. Diets are restricted to a steady 850 calories a day, and there is a full range of treatments and facilities, including an assault course. Raggdale Hall prices start at £71.50 per person per night in a twin room, rising to £130 per person in a suite.

Henlow Grange has a pleasantly relaxed approach to health and fitness, with the rare word "holiday" appearing frequently in its brochure. Set in the Bedfordshire countryside, just 40 miles northeast of London, Henlow offers a notably wide range of sporting activities: cycling, table tennis, swimming, that daily jog, walking, exercise classes. Fortunately, there is also good food, pleasant company, and all the usual comforts. Prices for a one-week stay start at £62.50 per night, which includes a good range of massages and

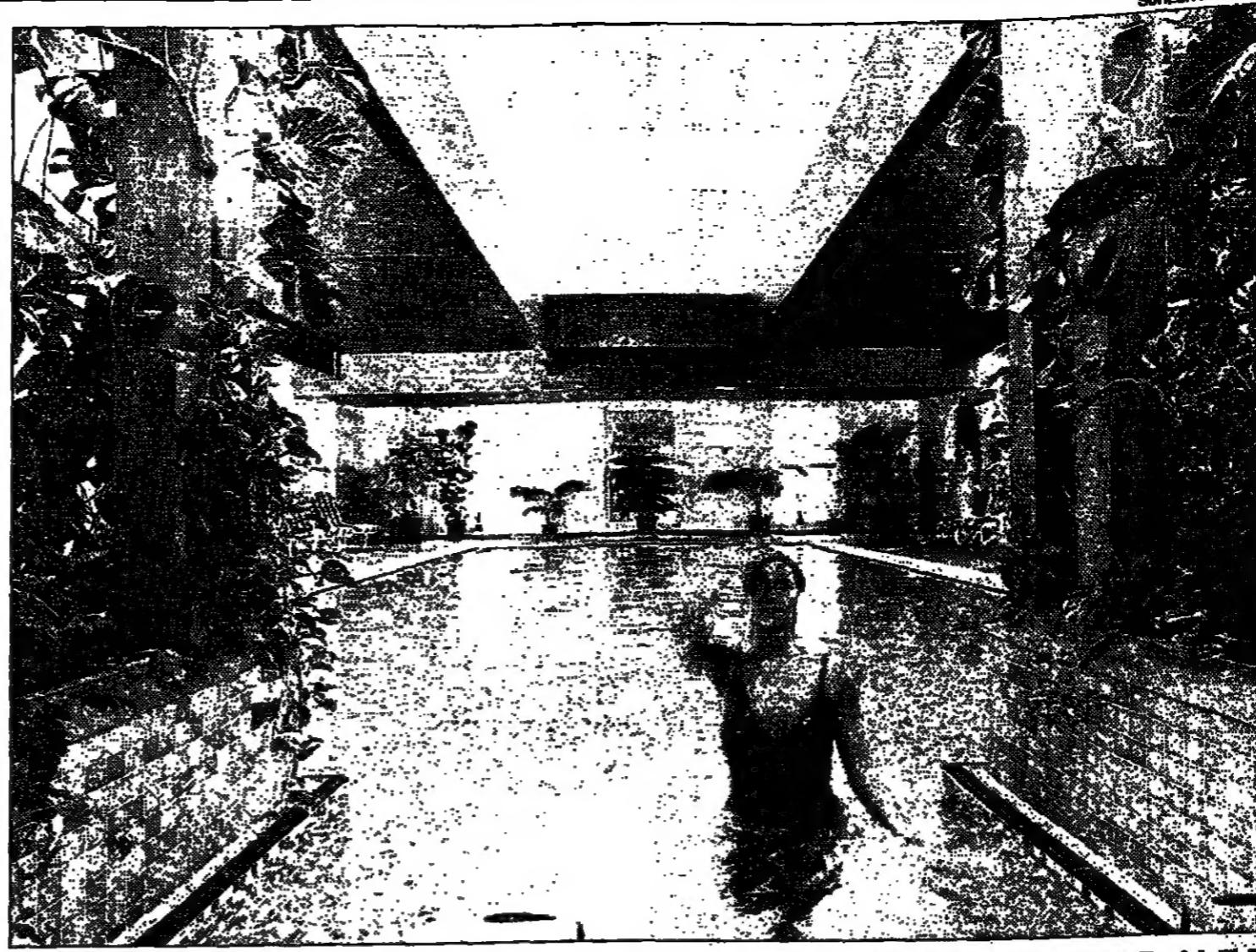
treatments, plus a total fitness and relaxation programme.

Everyone arriving at the Ingewood Health Hydro in the Berkshire Downs gets a comprehensive, individually prescribed regimen covering diet, exercise and treatments for the duration of the stay. Medical consultants and gym instructors are on-hand with special classes on subjects such as how to stop smoking, which are all part of the daily round. Keen swimmers can start their stay with a 45-hour fast on lemon and water, gradually returning to a healthy diet over the week. The normal regimen covers four treatments a day, all included in the tariff, with saunas, steam baths, massages and perhaps a mud bath. Single room prices at Ingewood start at £295 per week, three-day breaks from £210.

The Tyrianham Naturopathic Clinic at Newport Pagnell offers alternative medicine as the basis of the treatment. Fasting is permitted and vegetarian diets available, while treatments include acupuncture, inhalation, osteopathy and stress-release sessions. The clinic prefers clients to come on a medical recommendation and stay for a minimum of one week. Facilities include an indoor and outdoor heated pool, tennis, badminton, and a wide range of beauty treatments. Prices start at £179 per person per week, rising to £413.

Finally, moving north, the Brooklands Country House Health Farm near Preston offers an all-in price for full-board accommodation and a wide range of treatments. Other facilities at this pleasant country house include a Turkish bath and steam room, a solarium, a range of exercise machines, tennis, and an indoor pool. Prices here for one week, inclusive of treatments, start at £713 for a seven-night stay. Five and three-day breaks are also available.

For brochure and further information contact Champneys at Tring, Hertfordshire (0442 871555); Grayshott Hall, Hindhead, Surrey (0425 734337); Shrublands Hall, Ipswich, Suffolk (0473 630404); Forest Mere, Liphook, Hampshire (0428 722051); Ceder Falls, Tiverton, Somerset (0225 432265); Raggdale Hall, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire (0664 434831); Henlow Grange, Henlow, Bedfordshire (0482 811111); Ingewood Health Hydro, Kinver, Shropshire (0483 222222); Tyrianham Naturopathic Clinic, Newport Pagnell, Bedfordshire (0808 610450); Brooklands Country House Health Farm, Garstang, near Preston, Lancashire (0992 51562).



Five-star comforts: the food may be minimalist and alcohol non-existent, but the key to health farm living is luxury. Swimming at Raggdale Hall

SNOW REPORT

Skiers this week found themselves between a rock and a hard place as resort directors stretched the term "skiing" over unprecedently thin ice. What follows is a guide to the best of a bad lot. Uncited sectors of the following resorts may also be "open", but unmentionably so.

Zermatt: Long, "quite good"

runs on hard artificial snow in two upper sectors.

St Moritz: Good early season snow, off-piste "possible".

Verbier: Good natural snow on T-bar section of glacier.

Val d'Isère: Good skiing on flatish glacier sector; snow-making just holding its own against rocks elsewhere.

Trois Vallées (Meribel, Courchevel): Liaisons between resorts closed.

Les Menuires: Profiting from snowmaking.

Chamonix: Les Grands Montets and crevasses open only to skiers with a guide.

St Anton: Two long top to bottom runs on artificial snow reported good early in the day.

Doug Sager

Reach for the (alpine) sky

Skiers who are frustrated at the lack of snow should learn a new winter sport such as paragliding. Doug Sager writes

these, what you call. Hooray Henri?

He will not bad-mouth any particular school, but I interpret his "there are some good schools in Austria" as ungrudging, and his raised eyebrows over French *laissez-faire* methodology as warning signals. What really angers him are the idiots who try to learn on their own outside a school, or the unlicensed cowboy instructors who, he says, are responsible for the great majority of accidents.

We are interrupted by shouts of "Claude, Claude!" from all over the field, as the fledglings are finally ready to spread their wings. Every student is seemingly suspended at the foot of the brightly coloured rectangle of sail by dozens of spider's web strings, arms outstretched.

"Relax," he urges Mary. She manages a weak grin as Claude carefully checks the suspending strings for knots, the harness and risers for twists.

The sail is laid upside down on the uphill terrain immediately behind the pupil, with the outside edges slightly curled into a horseshoe arc. The idea is that by running forward with arms outstretched, the leading edge of the chute will be pulled up into the air and the cylindrical cells inflated to create a solid wing.

I observe that the pace of teaching is much more deliberate, the instructor more inclined to hands-on rehearsal of every movement, than when I first flew a few years ago. Claude explains that the Swiss licensing authorities, alarmed by a 70 per cent increase in serious accidents over the past year, have issued tougher teaching guidelines.

Anyone thinking of trying paragliding this winter should note that the Swiss standards are the most stringent in the world. But schools differ widely in the experience of their instructors, in the age and quality of school chutes, and in the suitability of the local terrain for teaching.

Veteran of nearly 5,000 flights, Claude does not hesitate to tell prospective clients that paragliding is not for them.

"If you are just out for a good time, you are most likely to have a bad experience," he warns. He has deliberately raised his prices 30 per cent this year to discourage the uncommitted. "I don't want

a life of its own, lifting each step higher off the ground until Mary is just skimming the surface.

"Now pull on the brakes!" Claude shouts. And the kite comes billowing down on a winded, wound-up and jubilant new convert to paragliding.

"I hate instructors who don't run along with their pupils," Claude confides as we trudge along with Mary to the top of the hillock, her sail furled around her like a butterfly's wings. This must be part of the new concern because nobody ever ran with me.

Running exercises continue until lunch. "Don't forget your helmet," Claude cautions Dave. Swinging in an insulated ski suit, Dave looks as if he would like to take more than his headgear off. The thermometer in the sun reads 30°C.

"The conditions here are just too good," Claude remarks wistfully. "We've had six weeks of perfect weather."

In the afternoon the class is bussed up the mountain for its first flight. The school guarantees a first-day flight of some 300 vertical metres.

Later analysis shows a "tired" chute. After more than 100 flights, the strings have deformed to alter the wing configuration, sinking the chute.

Next day, Peter is out flying the latest Genair 26, which so impresses him ("flies like a Rolls-Royce", he enthuses) that he soaps it up for £800.

Not to be outdone, Mary cards for the full course of flying and theory lessons leading to the Swiss federal licence (£250). It may be fun, but it ain't cheap.

At the landing zone, Claude is visibly impressed and congratulatory. "Nothing is more important to good flying than a cool head," he insists.

"Where's Peter?" Mary asks. Claude and I have been watching Peter sink like a rock, despite radical efforts to pull out of a gentle stall by advancing his leading edge. Fortunately, he lands in an open field.

At the landing zone, Claude is visibly impressed and congratulatory. "Nothing is more important to good flying than a cool head," he insists.

Now, camera ready, down at the school landing zone, where Claude is armed with two brightly coloured paddles to guide pupils into turns and to tell them exactly when to haul on the brakes for the landing stall.

In the air, turning is an easy matter of gently tugging on the brakes. Judging how to approach the field and when to pull up is an acquired skill.

At the end of the day, Mary is judged ready for a long flight into the already dark valley. Kathy is not. Claude confers with two other instructors on whether Mary's beginner chute is big enough to carry her light weight over the high tension wires running down

the valley between the take-off and landing sites.

Mary's boyfriend Peter, an accomplished pilot, flies class paragliding as she lifts off from 2,300m. He can see that, having lost altitude in a necessary turn, she is too low for the wires. Peter can see Mary checking the terrain below for emergency landing fields. Flying parallel with the electric lines, Mary eventually comes to a dip in the terrain which enables her to cross the wires safely.

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TRAVEL NEWS

• Surcharges are back on the holiday scene. Nearly 40 companies, including Sovereign, Enterprise, Thomas Cook, Kestrel, Ingaham, P&O Air Holidays, PGL Young Adventure and Cosmos, have had their surcharge proposals approved by the Association of British Travel Agents. As ABTA members, the companies are pledged to absorb the first 2 per cent of cost increases, and the surcharges apply to only some destinations and departure dates in the companies' programmes.

• Only a small proportion of mainly long-haul package holidays is affected by rising aviation fuel prices. Most holidays are covered by tour operators' no-surcharge guarantee. A newcomer this week to the growing number of companies which promise no surcharges is Caribbean Connection (01-631 4482).

• The Stella, a working boat converted into a hotel, will be making three spring cruises in The Netherlands and Belgium between March and May. Ports of call on the week-long voyages include Haarlem, Keukenhof, Delft, Rotterdam,

Gouda, Alkmaar and Maarsen. For a shared twin cabin the price is £695 all found (0730 619256).

• Day trips from Gatwick to Budapest, Prague and Warsaw have been organised by Island Sun (0293 547300). In-flight meals and a city sightseeing tour are included for £159.

• Air Europe is offering a two-for-the-price-of-one deal on business class flights before February 12 to Brussels, Paris, Munich and Geneva. Brussels costs £194, Paris £204, Munich £266 and Geneva £308 (reservations: 0293 562626).

Shona Crawford Poole

Travel Editor

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TRAVEL

Stalking ghosts in old Havana

KIM NAYLOR

Anne McElvoy,
in Cuba,
visits haunts
of rebels
old and new

As I stepped on board the Cubana flight in Paris, a chunk of the airplane door clattered to my feet. The air hostesses giggled helplessly. Inside, the air-conditioning belched dry ice into the cabin and we groped for our seats like unwilling extras in a heavy metal video. The plane arrived in Havana next day, but only half of the luggage did. The Cuban experience is unmistakable from the beginning, two parts laughter to one part confusion with a twist of anarchy.

I headed for Cuba intending to do some work, which proved foolishly optimistic. Most projects having been put paid to by the cheerful daily greeting of the Press department, "Yes, we have no interviews today", there was no alternative but to settle down and enjoy the place.

Havana is a sort of capital for which one has to steel oneself, so I put a first foot gingerly into the old town, a melancholy place, full of echoes of past splendour, its pleasures are sharp, louche, and mainly accompanied by alcohol, the ideal milieu for getting rid of any aestheticism that might have been unwittingly accumulated over the years.

Many are the lost souls who have tried to eat at the Bodeguita del Medio, the haunt of Hemingway, Greene and the assorted literary goodtimers who washed up in the Caribbean. You are offered a minty mojito cocktail while you wait for a seed and, like the first pomegranate with red kerchiefs they learn noisily about the "interventions, provocations and imperialist aggressions" of Cuban history. Ronald Reagan has pride of place in the Rogues' Gallery, caricatured in cowboy dress with the message "Thank you, idiot, for strengthening the Revolution".

The museum is a treasure trove of revolutionary minutiae; keys to the Sierra Maestra safe houses displayed next to the handmaidens of the Revolution man up their heroes' uniforms and the jacket worn by Fidel Castro on his triumphal entry into Havana.

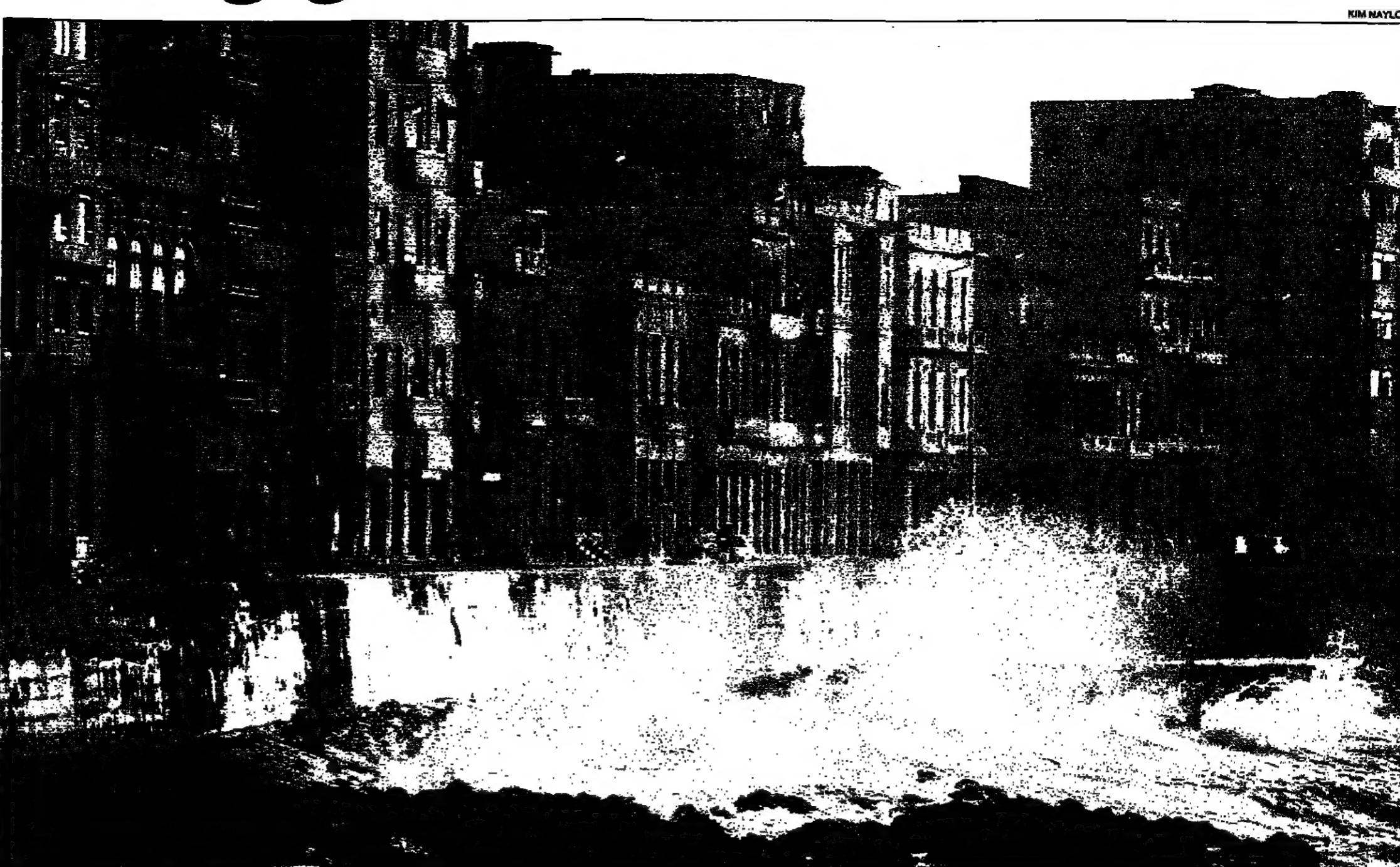
Cubans are fascinated by Hemingway, probably because he was one of the few gringos to laid back as themselves. He enjoyed semi-mythical status on the island, but his books are nowhere to be found, Cuban bookshops being stocked almost exclusively with the minor works of Lenin and Engels remained by the rest of the Eastern Bloc.

There are queues for everything in Havana, even to join other queues. They provide a splendid excuse for dawdling in the sun and chatting to Cubans who, once the formalities of "You change money?" and "Give me chewing gum" are accomplished, are open to chit-chat on most topics, except, at the moment, the uncertain future of their leader.

At the Coppelia ice-cream garden waiting time for a cone averages an hour, after which time the ice-cream runs out.

Cubans, well versed in the vagaries of supply, celebrate their victory by buying two cones at once. The ice-cream is delicious, one of Cuba's few culinary triumphs. What is it about socialism that produces such heavenly ice-cream in the midst of economic disaster?

Hotels range from the faded glory of the Inglaterra, with its stuccoed ceilings as high as the heavens, to the exquisitely tasteless Riviera, built like most of Havana's modern hotels with Mafia money in the 1950s. Meyer Lansky cooked his various nefarious books from here while appearing modestly in the accounts



Splendour past on Havana's waterfront: behind the now crumbling, sea-sprayed facades lie the old, colourful eating houses, "haunts of Hemingway, Greene and the assorted literary goodtimers who washed up in the Caribbean".

as the kitchen administrator. At the grandiose Museum of the Revolution, schoolchildren swarm in riotous assembly. Clad in mustard yellow with red kerchiefs, they learn noisily about the "interventions, provocations and imperialist aggressions" of Cuban history. Ronald Reagan has pride of place in the Rogues' Gallery, caricatured in cowboy dress with the message "Thank you, idiot, for strengthening the Revolution".

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Indeed, it was tempting to linger longer than planned in Trinidad, a sleepy, elegant Spanish colonial town with low houses painted in sugary pastels. Its central square is a relic of Fifties life, with emerald green, raspberry red and shimmering pink Chevrolets and Buicks cruising in the early evening to salsa music, their drivers vocally admiring the generously proportioned local womanhood. "The Cuban shape", one explained to my companion, "big nice".

As we stumbled down to an early breakfast next day, the locals were already installed at the bar, clinking tumblers brimming with rum. As breakfast comprised the ubiquitous and terrifying glutinous cheese sandwich, they appeared to have made the better choice.

Hoardings declared that "The first duty of the Revolution is work" which, given the extent of inactivity all around, may well have been one of Fidel Castro's practical jokes.

The further one proceeds towards Santiago de Cuba, the more fervent the declarations of socialist faith. The town hall there delivers the ultimatum: "My country or death, socialism or death, Marxist-Leninism or death".

Unaffected by such uncompromising choices, the population trades openly in dollars on the street — still illegal currency for most Cubans — and old men play draughts at tables on the pavement.

No amount of socialism has managed to re-educate the sybarites of Santiago; it remains a town of rum and music. Rumba, salsa and Cuban jazz emanate from tiny bars with the clientele standing five deep in the road outside to tap their feet until the early morning.

No Caribbean holiday

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preserved as a relic. The children pause solemnly in front of sunsize pictures of Castro and his fellow rebels, most of whom bear a disconcerting resemblance to the young Buddy Holly. Suitably re-educated, I headed for Santiago de Cuba at the far tip of the island, the cradle of the Revolution, driving along Cuba's main highway. It is a vast expanse of pot-holed four-lane road largely bereft of cars, with horse-drawn carts occupying the inside lane and joggers pounding up the central reservation.

I stopped in the seaside town of Cienfuegos, home to an improbable Moorish museum with a roof terrace bravely dispensing cocktails as strong as the sea winds which buffeted it. Neither the staff nor the clientele seemed perturbed by a sudden electric storm and everyone carried

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TRAVEL

'An army of statues shrouded in protective plastic to ward off cold weather and rain'



An irony accompanies the forlornly wrapped statues: many a Versaillais would pass up the expensively restored glories of the Palais without a second glance in exchange for improved local facilities. Photograph: Alistair Grant

Versailles, January 1990. The excitement of the bicentenary celebrations of the French Revolution last year seems far off as some of the army of statues in the Palais are shrouded in protective plastic to ward off the effects of cold weather (which has still not arrived) and the destructive power of acid rain.

The massive effort to spruce up France's historic monuments ahead of the 1789/1989 jamboree cost the state a small fortune in cleaning, remodelling, recasting and the generous application of gold leaf. Money well spent, though. Versailles, like Paris, was in sparkling condition for the army of tourists who flocked in to help with the celebrations and left almost enough of their cash behind to balance the huge French trade deficit.

Not that the French were uniformly enthusiastic about 1789 and all that. In Versailles, as elsewhere, there were complaints that bicentennial funds might better be spent on improvements to local facilities.

In any year, maintaining the Palais, with its 67 staircases, 352 chimneys, 2,000-plus windows, and 11 hectares of roof, is very much a full-time job. As for the 95 hectares of garden, in which these carefully wrapped statues now stand so forlornly, their greatest glory may have long departed, but when the plastic comes off in the spring, the tourists will assuredly be back.

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